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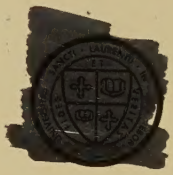

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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1905

The Heimskringla

A HISTORY OF

THE NORSE KINGS

BY

SNORRE STURLASON

DONE INTO ENGLISH OUT OF THE ICELANDIC

BY

SAMUEL LAING, Esq.

REVISED WITH NOTES BY

HON. RASMUS B. ANDERSON.

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THE HEIMSKRINGLA.

VOL. II.

SAGA OF OLAF HARALDSON.

(CONTINUED.)

85.—OF HROREK'S ASSAULT.

It happened on Ascension-day that King Olaf went to high mass, and the bishop went in procession around the church, and conducted the king; and when they came back to the church the bishop led the king to his seat on the north side of the choir. There Hrorek sat next to the king, and concealed his countenance in his upper cloak. When Olaf had seated himself Hrorek laid his hand on the king's shoulder, and felt it.

"Thou hast fine clothes on, cousin, today," said he.

King Olaf replies, "It is a festival to-day, in remembrance that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from earth."

King Hrorek says, "I understand nothing about it, so as to hold in my mind what ye tell me about Christ. Much of what ye tell me appears to me incredible, although many wonderful things may have come to pass in old times."

When the mass was finished Olaf stood up, held his

hands up over his head, and bowed down before the altar, so that his cloak hung down behind his shoulders. Then King Hrorek started up hastily and sharply, and struck at the king with a long knife of the kind called ryting; but the blow was received in the upper cloak at the shoulder, because the king was bending himself forwards. The clothes were much cut, but the king was not wounded. When the king perceived the attack he sprang upon the floor; and Hrorek struck at him again with the knife, but did not reach him, and said, "Art thou flying, Olaf, from me, a blind man?" The king ordered his men to seize him and lead him out of the church, which was done. After this attempt many hastened to King Olaf, and advised that King Hrorek should be killed. "It is," said they, "tempting your luck in the highest degree, king, to keep him with you, and protect him, whatever mischief he may undertake; for night and day he thinks upon taking your life. And if you send him away, we know no one who can watch him so that he will not in all probability escape; and if once he gets loose he will assemble a great multitude, and do much evil."

The king replies, "You say truly that many a one has suffered death for less offence than Hrorek's; but willingly I would not darken the victory I gained over the Upland kings, when in one morning hour I took five kings prisoners, and got all their kingdoms: but yet, as they were my relations, I should not be their murderer but upon need. As yet I can scarcely see whether Hrorek puts me in the necessity of killing him or not."

It was to feel if King Olaf had armour on or not that Hrorek had laid his hand on the king's shoulder.

86—KING HROREK'S JOURNEY TO ICELAND.

There was an Iceland man, by name Thorarin Nefiulfson, who had his relations in the north of the country. He was not of high birth, but particularly prudent, eloquent, and agreeable in conversation with people of distinction. He was also a far-travelled man, who had been long in foreign parts. Thorarin was a remarkably ugly man, principally because he had very ungainly limbs. He had great ugly hands, and his feet were still uglier. Thorarin was in Tunsberg when this event happened which has just been related, and he was known to King Olaf by their having had conversations together. Thorarin was just then done with rigging out a merchant vessel which he owned, and with which he intended to go to Iceland in summer. King Olaf had Thorarin with him as a guest for some days, and conversed much with him; and Thorarin even slept in the king's lodgings. One morning early the king awoke while the others were still sleeping. The sun had newly risen in the sky, and there was much light within. The king saw that Thorarin had stretched out one of his feet from under the bed-clothes, and he looked at the foot a while. In the meantime the others in the lodging awoke; and the king said to Thorarin, "I have been awake for a while, and have seen a sight which was worth seeing; and that is a man's foot so ugly that I do not think an uglier can be found in this merchant town." Thereupon

he told the others to look at it, and see if it was not so; and all agreed with the king. When Thorarin observed what they were talking about, he said, "There are few things for which you cannot find a match, and that may be the case here."

The king says, "I would rather say that such another ugly foot cannot be found in the town, and I would lay any wager upon it."

Then said Thorarin, "I am willing to bet that I shall find an uglier foot still in the town."

The king—"Then he who wins shall have the right to get any demand from the other he chooses to make."

"Be it so," said Thorarin. Thereupon he stretches out his other foot from under the bed-clothes, and it was in no way handsomer than the other, and moreover, wanted the little toe. "There," said Thorarin, "see now, king, my other foot, which is so much uglier; and, besides, has no little toe. Now I have won."

The king replies, "That other foot was so much uglier than this one by having five ugly toes upon it, and this has only four; and now I have won the choice of asking something from thee."

"The sovereign's decision must be right," says Thorarin; "but what does the king require of me?"

"To take Hrorek," said the king, "to Greenland, and deliver him to Leif Eirikson."

Thorarin replies, "I have never been in Greenland."

The king—"Thou, who art a far-travelled man, wilt now have an opportunity of seeing Greenland, if thou hast never been there before."

At first Thorarin did not say much about it; but as the king insisted on his wish he did not entirely decline, but said, "I will let you hear, king, what my desire would have been had I gained the wager. It would have been to be received into your body of court-men; and if you will grant me that, I will be the more zealous now in fulfilling your pleasure." The king gave his consent, and Thorarin was made one of the court-men. Then Thorarin rigged out his vessel, and when he was ready he took on board King Hrorek. When Thorarin took leave of King Olaf, he said, "Should it now turn out, king, as is not improbable, and often happens, that we cannot effect the voyage to Greenland, but must run for Iceland or other countries, how shall I get rid of this king in a way that will be satisfactory to you?"

The king—"If thou comest to Iceland, deliver him into the hands of Gudmund Eyolfson, or of Skapte, the lagman, or of some other chief who will receive my tokens and message of friendship. But if thou comest to other countries nearer to this, do so with him that thou canst know with certainty that King Hrorek never again shall appear in Norway; but do so only when thou seest no other way of doing whatsoever."

When Thorarin was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed outside of all the rocks and islands, and when he was to the north of the Naze set right out into the ocean. He did not immediately get a good wind, but he avoided coming near the land. He sailed until he made land which he knew, in the south part of Iceland, and sailed west around the land out into the Greenland ocean.

There he encountered heavy storms, and drove long about upon the ocean; but when summer was coming to an end he landed again in Iceland in Breidafjord. Thorgils Arason[1] was the first man of any consequence who came to him. Thorarin brings him the king's salutation, message, and tokens, with which was the desire about King Hrorek's reception. Thorgils received these in a friendly way, and invited King Hrorek to his house, where he stayed all winter. But he did not like being there, and begged that Thorgils would let him go to Gudmund; saying he had heard some time or other that there in Gudmund's house, was the most sumptuous way of living in Iceland, and that it was intended he should be in Gudmund's hands. Thorgils let him have his desire, and conducted him with some men to Gudmund at Modruveller. Gudmund received Hrorek kindly on account of the king's message, and he stayed there the next winter. He did not like being there either; and then Gudmund gave him a habitation upon a small farm called Kalfskin, where there were but few neighbours. There Hrorek passed the third winter, and said that since he had laid down his kingdom he thought himself most comfortably situated here; for here he was most respected by all. The summer after Hrorek fell sick, and died; and it is said he is the only king whose bones rest in Iceland. Thorarin Nefiulfson was afterwards for a long time upon voyages; but sometimes he was with King Olaf.

[1]Thorgils was the son of Are Marson, who visited America (Vindland). Thorgils, who was still alive in the year 1024, was noted for his kindness toward all persecuted persons.

87.—BATTLE IN ULFREKS-FJORD.

The summer that Thorarin went with Hrorek to Iceland, Hjalte Skeggjason went also to Iceland, and King Olaf gave him many friendly gifts with him when they parted. The same summer Eyvind Urarhorn went on an expedition to the West sea, and came in autumn to Ireland, to the Irish king Konofogor.[1] In autumn Einar earl of Orkney and this Irish king met in Ulfreks-fjord, and there was a great battle, in which Konofogor gained the victory, having many more people. The earl fled with a single ship, and came back about autumn to Orkney, after losing most of his men and all the booty they had made. The earl was much displeased with his expedition, and threw the blame upon the Northmen, who had been in the battle on the side of the Irish king, for making him lose the victory.

88.—OLAF PREPARES FOR HIS BRIDAL JOURNEY.

Now we begin again our story where we let it slip—at King Olaf's travelling to his bridal, to receive his betrothed Ingegerd the king's daughter. The king had a great body of men with him, and so chosen a body that all the great people he could lay hold of followed him; and every man of consequence had a chosen band of men with him distinguished by birth or other qualifications. The whole were well appointed, and equipped in ships, weapons, and clothes. They steered the fleet eastwards to Konungahella; but when they arrived there they heard

[1]Konofogor's Irish name was Connor.

nothing of the Swedish king and none of his men had come there. King Olaf remained a long time in summer (1018) at Konungahella, and endeavored carefully to make out what people said of the Swedish king's movements, or what were his designs; but no person could tell him anything for certain about it. Then he sent men up to Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, to ask him if he knew how it came to pass that the Swedish king did not come to the meeting agreed on. The earl replies, that he did not know. "But as soon," said he, "as I hear, I shall send some of my men to King Olaf, to let him know if there be any other cause for the delay than the multitude of affairs; as it often happens that the Swedish king's movements are delayed by this more than he could have expected."

89.—OF THE SWEDISH KING'S CHILDREN.

This Swedish king, Olaf Eirikson, had first a concubine who was called Edla, a daughter of an earl of Vindland, who had been captured in war, and therefore was called the king's slave-girl. Their children were Emund, Astrid, Holmfrid. . . . They had, besides, a son, who was born the day before St. Jacob's-day. When the boy was to be christened the bishop called him Jacob, which the Swedes did not like, as there never had been a Swedish king called Jacob. All King Olaf's children were handsome in appearance, and clever from childhood. The queen was proud, and did not behave well towards her step-children; therefore the king sent his son

Emund to Vindland, to be fostered by his mother's relations, where he for a long time neglected his Christianity. The king's daughter, Astrid, was brought up in West Gautland, in the house of a worthy man called Egil. She was a very lovely girl: her words came well into her conversation; she was merry, but modest, and very generous. When she was grown up she was often in her father's house, and every man thought well of her. King Olaf was haughty and harsh in his speech. He took very ill the uproar and clamour the country people had raised against him at the Upsala Thing, as they had threatened him with violence, for which he laid the chief blame on Earl Ragnvald. He made no preparation for the bridal, according to the agreement to marry his daughter Ingegerd to Olaf the king of Norway, and to meet him on the borders for that purpose. As the summer advanced many of his men were anxious to know what the king's intentions were; whether to keep to the agreement with King Olaf, or break his word, and with it the peace of the country. But no one was so bold as to ask the king, although they complained of it to Ingegerd, and besought her to find out what the king intended. She replied, "I have no inclination to speak to the king again about the matters between him and King Olaf; for he answered me ill enough once before when I brought forward Olaf's name." In the meantime Ingegerd, the king's daughter, took it to heart, became melancholy and sorrowful, and yet very curious to know what the king intended. She had much suspicion that he would not keep his word and promise to King Olaf;

for he appeared quite enraged whenever Olaf the Thick's name was in any way mentioned.

90.—OF THE SWEDISH KING OLAF'S HUNTING.

One morning early the king rode out with his dogs and falcons, and his men around him. When they let slip the falcons the king's falcon killed two black-cocks in one flight, and three in another. The dogs ran and brought the birds when they had fallen to the ground. The king ran after them, took the game from them himself, was delighted with his sport, and said, "It will be long before the most of you have such success." They agreed in this; adding, that in their opinion no king had such luck in hunting as he had. Then the king rode home with his followers in high spirits. Ingegerd, the king's daughter, was just going out of her lodging when the king came riding into the yard, and she turned round and saluted him. He saluted her in return, laughing; produced the birds, and told her the success of his chase.

"Dost thou know of any king," said he, "who made so great a capture in so short a time?"

"It is indeed," replied she, "a good morning's hunting, to have got five black-cocks; but it was a still better when, in one morning, the king of Norway, Olaf, took five kings, and subdued all their kingdoms."

When the king heard this he sprang from his horse, turned to Ingegerd, and said, "Thou shalt know, Ingegerd, that however great thy love may be for this man, thou shalt never get him, nor he get thee. I will marry thee to some chief with whom I can be in friendship;

but never can I be a friend of the man who has robbed me of my kingdom, and done me great mischief by marauding and killing through the land." With that their conversation broke off, and each went away.

91.—OLAF THE NORWAY KING'S COUNSELS.

Ingegerd, the king's daughter, had now full certainty of King Olaf's intention, and immediately sent men to West Gautland to Earl Ragnvald, and let him know how it stood with the Swedish king, and that the agreement made with the king of Norway was broken; and advising the earl and people of West Gautland to be upon their guard, as no peace from the people of Norway was to be expected. When the earl got this news he sent a message through all his kingdom, and told the people to be cautious, and prepared in case of war or pillage from the side of Norway. He also sent men to King Olaf the Thick, and let him know the message he had received, and likewise that he wished for himself to hold peace and friendship with King Olaf; and therefore he begged him not to pillage in his kingdom. When this message came to King Olaf it made him both angry and sorry; and for some days nobody got a word from him. He then held a House-Thing with his men, and in it Bjorn arose, and first took the word. He began his speech by telling that he had proceeded eastward last winter to establish a peace, and he told how kindly Earl Ragnvald had received him; and, on the other hand, how crossly and heavily the Swedish king had accepted the proposal. "And the agreement," said he, "which was made,

was made more by means of the strength of the people, the power of Thorgny, and the aid of the earl, than by the king's good-will. Now, on these grounds, we know for certain that it is the king who has caused the breach of the agreement; therefore we ought by no means to make the earl suffer, for it is proved that he is King Olaf's firm friend." The king wished now to hear from the chiefs and other leaders of troops what course he should adopt. "Whether shall we go against Gautland, and maraud there with such men as we have got; or is there any other course that appears to you more advisable?" He spoke both long and well.

Thereafter many powerful men spoke, and all were at last agreed in dissuading from hostilities. They argued thus:—"Although we are a numerous body of men who are assembled here, yet they are all only people of weight and power; but, for a war expedition, young men who are in quest of property and consideration are more suitable. It is also the custom of people of weight and power, when they go into battle or strife, to have many people with them whom they can send out before them for their defence; for the men do not fight worse who have little property, but even better than those who are brought up in the midst of wealth." After these considerations the king resolved to dismiss this army from any expedition, and to give every man leave to return home; but proclaimed, at the same time, that next summer the people over the whole country would be called out in a general levy, to march immediately against the Swedish king, and punish him for his want of faith. All

thought well of this plan. Then the king returned northwards to Viken, and took his abode at Sarpsborg in autumn, and ordered all things necessary for winter provision to be collected there; and he remained there all winter (1019) with a great retinue.

92.—SIGVAT THE SKALD'S JOURNEY EASTWARDS.

People talked variously about Earl Ragnvald; some said he was King Olaf's sincere friend; others did not think this likely, and thought it stood in his power to warn the Swedish king to keep his word, and the agreement concluded on between him and King Olaf. Sigvat the poet often expressed himself in conversation as Earl Ragnvald's great friend, and often spoke of him to King Olaf; and he offered to the king to travel to Earl Ragnvald's and spy after the Swedish king's doings, and to attempt, if possible, to get the settlement of the agreement. The king thought well of this plan; for he oft, and with pleasure, spoke to his confidential friends about Ingegerd, the king's daughter. Early in winter (1019) Sigvat the skald, with two companions, left Sarpsborg, and proceeded eastwards over the moors to Gautland. Before Sigvat and King Olaf parted he composed these verses:—

"Sit happy in thy hall, O king!
Till I come back, and good news bring:
The skald will bid thee now farewell,
Till he brings news well worth to tell.
He wishes to the helmed hero
Health, and long life, and a full flow
Of honour, riches, and success—
And, parting, ends his song with this,
The farewell word is spoken now—
The word that to the heart lies nearest;
And yet, O king! before I go,
One word on what I hold the dearest.
I fain would say, 'O! may God save
To thee the bravest of the brave,
The land which is thy right by birth!'—
This is my dearest wish on earth."

Then they proceeded eastwards towards Eid, and had difficulty in crossing the river in a little cobble; but they escaped, though with danger: and Sigvat sang:—

"On shore the crazy boat I drew,
Wet to the skin, and frightened too;
For truly there was danger then:
The mocking hill elves laughed again,
To see us in this cobble sailing,
And all our sea-skill unavailing.
But better did it end, you see,
Than any of us could foresee."

Then they went through the Eid forest, and Sigvat sang:—

"A hundred miles through Eid's old wood,
And devil an alehouse, bad or good,—
A hundred miles, and tree and sky
Were all that met the weary eye.
With many a grumble, many a groan,
A hundred miles we trudged right on;
And every king's man of us bore
On each foot-sole a bleeding sore."

They came then through Gautland, and in the evening reached a farm-house called Hof. The door was bolted so that they could not come in; and the servants told them it was a fast-day, and they could not get admittance. Sigvat sang:—

"Now up to Hof in haste I hie,
And round the house and yard I pry.
Doors are fast locked—but yet within,
Methinks, I hear some stir and din.
I peep, with nose close to the ground,
Below the door, but small cheer found.
My trouble with few words was paid—
"Tis holy time,' the house-folks said.
Heathens! to shove me thus away!
I' the foul fiend's claws may you all lay."

Then they came to another farm, where the good-wife was standing at the door, and told them not to come in, for they were busy with a sacrifice to the elves. Sigvat sang of it thus:—

"'My poor lad, enter not, I pray!'
Thus to me did the old wife say;
'For all of us are heathens here,
And I for Odin's wrath do fear.'
The ugly witch drove me away,
Like scared wolf sneaking from his prey,
When she told me that there within
Was sacrifice to foul Odin."

Another evening they came to three bondes, all of them

of the name of Olver, who drove them away. Sigvat sang:—

"Three of one name,
To their great shame,
The traveller late
Drove from their gate!
Travellers may come
From our viking-home,
Unbidden guests
At these Olvers' feasts."

They went on farther that evening, and came to a fourth bonde, who was considered the most hospitable man in the country; but he drove them away also. Then Sigvat sang:—

"Then on I went to seek night's rest
From one who was said to be the best,
The kindest host in the land around,
And there I hoped to have quarters found.
But, faith, 'twas little use to try;
For not so much as raise an eye
Would this huge wielder of the spade:
If he's the best, it must be said
Bad is the best, and the skald's praise
Cannot be given to churls like these.
I almost wished that Asta's son
In the Eid forest had been one,
When we, his men, were even put
Lodging to crave in a heathen's hut.
I knew not where the earl to find;
Four times driven off by men unkind,
I wandered now the whole night o'er,
Driven like a dog from door to door."

Now when they came to Earl Ragnvald's the earl said they must have had a severe journey. Then Sigvat sang:—

"The message-bearers of the king
From Norway came his words to bring;
And truly for their master they
Hard work have done before to-day.
We did not loiter on the road,
But on we pushed for thy abode:
Thy folk, in sooth, were not so kind
That we cared much to lag behind.
But Eid forest safe we found,
From robbers free to the eastern bound:
This praise to thee, great earl, is due—
The skald says only what is true."

Earl Ragnvald gave Sigvat a gold arm-ring, and a woman said "he had not made the journey with his black eyes for nothing." Sigvat sang:—

"My coal-black eyes
Dost thou despise?
They have lighted me
Across the sea
To gain this golden prize:
They have lighted me,
Thy eyes to see,
O'er Iceland's main,
O'er hill and plain:
Where Nanna's lad would fear to be
They have lighted me."

Sigvat was long entertained kindly and well in the

house of Earl Ragnvald. The earl heard by letters, sent by Ingegerd the king's daughter, that ambassadors from King Jarisleif were come from Russia to King Olaf of Svithjod to ask his daughter Ingegerd in marriage, and that King Olaf had given them hopes that he would agree to it. About the same time King Olaf's daughter Astrid came to Earl Ragnvald's court, and a great feast was made for her. Sigvat soon became acquainted by conversation with the king's daughter, and she knew him by name and family, for Ottar the skald, Sigvat's sister's son, had long intimate acquaintance with King Olaf, the Swedish king. Among other things talked of, Earl Ragnvald asked Sigvat if the king of Norway would not marry the king's daughter Astrid. "If he would do that," said he, "I think we need not ask the Swedish king for his consent." Astrid, the king's daughter, said exactly the same. Soon after Sigvat returns home, and comes to King Olaf at Sarpsborg a little before Yule.

When Sigvat came home to King Olaf he went into the hall, and, looking around on the walls, he sang:—

"When our men their arms are taking
The raven's wings with greed are shaking;
When they come back to drink in hall
Brave spoil they bring to deck the wall—
Shields, helms, and panzers,[1] all in row,
Stripped in the field from lifeless foe.
In truth no royal nail comes near
Thy splendid nail in precious gear."

Afterwards Sigvat told of his journey, and sang these verses:—

"The king's court-guards desire to hear
About our journey and our cheer.
Our ships in autumn reach the sound,
But long the way to Swedish ground.
With joyless weather, wind and rain,
And pinching cold, and feet in pain—
With sleep, fatigue, and want oppressed,
No songs had we—we scarce had rest."

[1]The Pantzer—a complete suit of plate-armour.

And when he came into conversation with the king he sang:—

"When first I met the earl I told
How our king loved a friend so bold;
How in his heart he loved a man
With hand to do, and head to plan.
Thou generous king! with zeal and care
I sought to advance thy great affair;
For messengers from Russian land
Had come to ask Ingegerd's hand.
The earl, thy friend, bids thee, who art
So mild and generous of heart,
His servants all who here may come
To cherish in thy royal home;
And thine who may come to the east
In Ragnvald's hall shall find a feast—
In Ragnvald's house shall find a home—
At Ragnvald's court be still welcome.
When first I came the people's mind
Incensed by Eirik's son I find;
And he refused thy wish to meet,
Alleging treachery and deceit.
But I explained how it was here,
For earl and king, advantage clear
With thee to hold the strictest peace,
And make all force and foray cease.
The earl is wise, and understands
The need of peace for both the lands;
And he entreats thee not to break
The present peace for vengeance's sake!"

He immediately tells King Olaf the news he had heard; and at first the king was much cast down when he heard of King Jarisleif's suit, and he said he expected nothing but evil from King Olaf; but wished he might be able to return it in such a way as Olaf should remember. A while afterwards the king asks Sigvat about various news from Gautland. Sigvat spoke a great deal about Astrid, the king's daughter; how beautiful she was, how agreeable in her conversation; and that all declared she was in no respect behind her sister Ingegerd. The king listened with pleasure to this. Then Sigvat told him the conversation he and Astrid had had between themselves, and the king was delighted at the idea. "The Swedish king," said he, "will scarcely think that I will dare to marry a daughter of his without his consent." But this speech of his was not known generally. King Olaf and Sigvat the skald often spoke about it. The king inquired particularly of Sigvat what he knew about Earl Ragnvald, and "if he be truly our friend," said the king. Sigvat

said that the earl was King Olaf's best friend, and sang these verses:—

"The mighty Olaf should not cease
With him to hold good terms and peace;
For this good earl unwearied shows
He is thy friend where all are foes.
Of all who dwell by the East Sea
So friendly no man is as he:
At all their Things he takes thy part,
And is thy firm friend, hand and heart."

93.—RAGNVALD AND ASTRID'S JOURNEY.

After Yule (1019), Thord Skotakol, a sister's son of Sigvat, attended by one of Sigvat's footboys, who had been with Sigvat the autumn before in Gautland, went quite secretly from the court, and proceeded to Gautland. When they came to Earl Ragnvald's court, they produced the tokens which Olaf himself had sent to the earl, that he might place confidence in Thord. Without delay the earl made himself ready for a journey, as did Astrid, the king's daughter; and the earl took with him 120 men, who were chosen both from among his courtmen and the sons of great bondes, and who were carefully equipped in all things, clothes, weapons, and horses. Then they rode northwards to Sarpsborg, and came there at Candlemas.

94.—OF KING OLAF'S MARRIAGE.

King Olaf had put all things in order in the best style. There were all sorts of liquors of the best that could be got, and all other preparations of the same quality. Many people of consequence were summoned in from their residences. When the earl arrived with his retinue the king received him particularly well; and the earl was

shown to a large, good, and remarkably well-furnished house for his lodging; and serving-men and others were appointed to wait on him; and nothing was wanting, in any respect, that could grace a feast. Now when the entertainment had lasted some days, the king, the earl, and Astrid had a conference together; and the result of it was, that Earl Ragnvald contracted Astrid, daughter of the Swedish king Olaf, to Olaf king of Norway, with the same dowry which had before been settled that her sister Ingegerd should have from home. King Olaf, on his part, should give Astrid the same bride-gift that had been intended for her sister Ingegerd. Thereupon an eke was made to the feast, and King Olaf and Queen Astrid's wedding was drunk in great festivity. Earl Ragnvald then returned to Gautland, and the king gave the earl many great and good gifts at parting; and they parted the dearest of friends, which they continued to be while they lived.

95.—THE AGREEMENT BROKEN BY OLAF.

The spring (1019) thereafter came ambassadors from King Jarisleif in Novgorod to Svithjod, to treat more particularly about the promise given by King Olaf the preceding summer to marry his daughter Ingegerd to King Jarisleif. King Olaf talked about the business with Ingegerd, and told her it was his pleasure that she should marry King Jarisleif. She replied, "If I marry King Jarisleif, I must have as my bride-gift the town and earldom of Ladoga." The Russian ambassadors agreed to

this, on the part of their sovereign. Then said Ingegerd. "If I go east to Russia, I must choose the man in Svithjod whom I think most suitable to accompany me; and I must stipulate that he shall not have any less title, or in any respect less dignity, privilege, and consideration there, than he has here." This the king and the ambassadors agreed to, and gave their hands upon it in confirmation of the condition.

"And who," asked the king, "is the man thou wilt take with thee as thy attendent?"

"That man," she replied, "is my relation Earl Ragnvald."

The king replies, "I have resolved to reward Earl Ragnvald in a different manner for his treason against his master in going to Norway with my daughter, and giving her as a concubine to that fellow, who he knew was my greatest enemy. I shall hang him up this summer."

Then Ingegerd begged her father to be true to the promise he had made her, and had confirmed by giving his hand upon it. By her entreaties it was at last agreed that the king should promise to let Earl Ragnvald go in peace from Svithjod, but that he should never again appear in the king's presence, or come back to Svithjod while Olaf reigned. Ingegerd then sent messengers to the earl to bring him these tidings, and to appoint a place of meeting. The earl immediately prepared for his journey; rode up to East Gautland; procured there a vessel, and, with his retinue, joined Ingegerd, and they proceeded together eastward to Russia. There Ingegerd

was married to King Jarisleif; and their children were Valdemar, Vissivald, and Holte the Bold. Queen Ingegerd gave Earl Ragnvald the town of Ladoga, and earldom belonging to it. Earl Ragnvald was there a long time, and was a celebrated man. His sons and Ingebjorg's were Earl Ulf and Earl Eilif.

96.—HISTORY OF THE LAGMAN EMUND.

There was a man called Emund of Skara, who was lagman of West Gautland, and was a man of great understanding and eloquence, and of high birth, great connection, and very wealthy; but was considered deceitful, and not to be trusted. He was the most powerful man in West Gautland after the earl was gone. The same spring (1019) that Earl Ragnvald left Gautland the Gautland people held a Thing among themselves, and often expressed their anxiety to each other about what the Swedish king might do. They heard he was incensed because they had rather held in friendship with the king of Norway than striven against him; and he was also enraged against those who had attended his daughter Astrid to Norway. Some proposed to seek help and support from the king of Norway, and to offer him their services; others dissuaded from this measure, as West Gautland had no strength to oppose to the Swedes. "And the king of Norway," said they, "is far from us, the chief strength of his country very distant; and therefore let us first send men to the Swedish king to attempt to come to some reconciliation with him. If that fail, we can still turn to the king of Norway." Then the bondes asked Emund

to undertake this mission, to which he agreed; and he proceeded with thirty men to East Gautland, where there were many of his relations and friends, who received him hospitably. He conversed there with the most prudent men about this difficult business; and they were all unanimous on one point,—that the king's treatment of them was against law and reason. From thence Emund went into Svithjod, and conversed with many men of consequence, who all expressed themselves in the same way. Emund continued his journey thus, until one day, towards evening, he arrived at Upsala, where he and his retinue took a good lodging, and stayed there all night. The next day Emund waited upon the king, who was just then sitting in the Thing surrounded by many people. Emund went before him, bent his knee, and saluted him. The king looked at him, saluted him, and asked him what news he brought.

Emund replies, "There is little news among us Gautlanders; but it appears to us a piece of remarkable news that the proud, stupid Atte, in Vermaland, whom we look upon as a great sportsman, went up to the forest in winter with his snow-shoes and his bow. After he had got as many furs in the mountains as filled his hand-sledge so full that he could scarcely drag it, he returned home from the woods. But on the way he saw a squirrel in the trees, and shot at it, but did not hit; at which he was so angry, that he left the sledge to run after the squirrel: but still the squirrel sprang where the wood was thickest, sometimes among the roots of the trees, sometimes in the branches, sometimes among the arms that stretch from

tree to tree. When Atte shot at it the arrows flew too high or too low, and the squirrel never jumped so that Atte could get a fair aim at him. He was so eager upon this chase that he ran the whole day after the squirrel, and yet could not get hold of it. It was now getting dark; so he threw himself down upon the snow, as he was wont, and lay there all night in a heavy snow-storm. Next day Atte got up to look after his sledge, but never did he find it again; and so he returned home. And this is the only news, king, I have to tell."

The king says, "This is news of but little importance, if it be all thou hast to tell."

Emund replies, "Lately something happened which may well be called news. Gaute Tofason went with five war-ships out of the Gaut river, and when he was lying at the Eikrey Isles there came five large Danish merchant-ships there. Gaute and his men immediately took four of the great vessels, and made a great booty without the loss of a man; but the fifth vessel slipped out to sea, and sailed away. Gaute gave chase with one ship, and at first came nearer to them; but as the wind increased, the Danes got away. Then Gaute wanted to turn back; but a storm came on so that he lost his ship at Hlesey, with all the goods, and the greater part of his crew. In the meantime his people were waiting for him at the Eikrey Isles; but the Danes came over in fifteen merchant-ships, killed them all, and took all the booty they had made. So but little luck had they with their greed of plunder."

The king replied, "That is great news, and worth being told; but what now is thy errand here?"

Emund replies, "I travel, sire, to obtain your judgment in a difficult case, in which our law and the Upsala law do not agree."

The king asks, "What is thy appeal case?"

Emund replies, "There were two noble-born men of equal birth, but unequal in property and disposition. They quarrelled about some land, and did each other much damage; but most was done to him who was the more powerful of the two. This quarrel, however, was settled, and judged of at a General Thing; and the judgment was, that the most powerful should pay a compensation. But at the first payment, instead of paying a goose, he paid a gosling; for an old swine he paid a sucking pig; and for a mark of stamped gold only a half-mark, and for the other half-mark nothing but clay and dirt; and, moreover, threatened, in the most violent way, the people whom he forced to receive such goods in payment. Now, sire, what is your judgment?"

The king replies, "He shall pay the full equivalent whom the judgment ordered to do so, and that faithfully; and further, threefold to his king: and if payment be not made within a year and a day, he shall be cut off from all his property, his goods confiscated, and half go the king's house, and half to the other party."

Emund took witnesses to this judgment among the most considerable of the men who were present, according to the laws which were held in the Upsala Thing. He then saluted the king, and went his way; and other men brought their cases before the king, and he sat late in the day upon the cases of the people. Now when

the king came to table, he asked where Lagman Emund was. It was answered, he was home at his lodgings. "Then," said the king, "go after him, and tell him to be my guest to-day." Thereafter the dishes were borne in; then came the musicians with harps, fiddles, and musical instruments; and lastly, the cup-bearers. The king was particularly merry, and had many great people at table with him, so that he thought little of Emund. The king drank the whole day, and slept all the night after; but in the morning the king awoke, and recollected what Emund had said the day before: and when he had put on his clothes, he let his wise men be summoned to him; for he had always twelve of the wisest men who sat in judgment with him, and treated the more difficult cases; and that was no easy business, for the king was ill-pleased if the judgment was not according to justice, and yet it was of no use to contradict him. In this meeting the king ordered Lagman Emund to be called before them. The messenger returned, and said, "Sire, Lagman Emund rode away yesterday as soon as he had dined." "Then," said the king, "tell me, ye good chiefs, what may have been the meaning of that law-case which Emund laid before us yesterday?"

They replied, "You must have considered it yourself, if you think there was any other meaning under it than what he said."

The king replied, "By the two noble-born men whom he spoke of, who were at variance, and of whom one was more powerful than the other, and who did each other damage, he must have meant us and Olaf the Thick."

They answered, "It is, sire, as you say."

The king—"Our case was judged at the Upsala Thing. But what was his meaning when he said that bad payment was made; namely, a gosling for a goose, a pig for a swine, and clay and dirt for half of the money instead of gold?"

Arnvid the Blind replied, "Sire, red gold and clay are things very unlike; but the difference is still greater between king and slave. You promised Olaf the Thick your daughter Ingegerd, who, in all branches of her descent, is born of kings, and of the Upland Swedish race of kings, which is the most noble in the North; for it is traced up to the gods themselves. But now Olaf has got Astrid; and although she is a king's child, her mother was but a slave-woman, and, besides, of Vindish race. Great difference, indeed, must there be between these kings, when the one takes thankfully such a match; and now it is evident, as might be expected, that no Northman is to be placed by the side of the Upsala kings. Let us all give thanks that it has so turned out; for the gods have long protected their descendants, although many now neglect this faith."

There were three brothers:—Arnvid the Blind, who had a great understanding, but was so weak-sighted that he was scarcely fit for war; the second was Thorvid the Stammerer, who could not utter two words together at one time, but was remarkably bold and courageous; the third was Freyvid the Deaf, who was hard of hearing. All these brothers were rich and powerful men, of noble birth, great wisdom, and all very dear to the king.

Then said King Olaf, "What means that which Emund said about Atte the Dull?"

None made any reply, but the one looked at the other.

"Speak freely," said the king.

Then said Thorvid the Stammerer, "Atte—quarrelsome—greedy—jealous—deceitful—dull."

Then said the king, "To whom are these words of reproach and mockery applied?"

Freyvid the Deaf replied, "We will speak more clearly if we have your permission."

The king—"Speak freely, Freyvid, what you will."

Freyvid took up the word, and spoke. "My brother Thorvid, who is considered to be the wisest of us brothers, holds the words 'quarrelsome, greedy, jealous, dull,' to be one and the same thing; for it applies to him who is weary of peace, longs for small things without attaining them, while he lets great and useful things pass away as they came. I am deaf; yet so loud have many spoken out, that I can perceive that all men, both great and small, take it ill that you have not kept your promise to the king of Norway; and, worse than that, that you broke the decision of the community as it was delivered at Upsala Thing. You need not fear either the king of Norway, or the king of Denmark, or any other, so long as the Swedish army will follow you; but if the people of the country unanimously turn against you, we, your friends, see no counsel that can be of advantage to you."

The king asks, "Who is the chief who dares to betray the country and me?"

Freyvid replies, "All Swedes desire to have the ancient

laws, and their full rights. Look but here, sire, how many chiefs are sitting in council with you. I think, in truth, we are but six whom you call your councillors: all the others, so far as I know, have ridden forth through the districts to hold Things with the people; and we will not conceal it from you, that the message-token has gone forth to assemble a Retribution-thing.[1] All of us brothers have been invited to take part in the decisions of this council, but none of us will bear the name of traitor to the sovereign; for that our father never was."

Then the king said, "What council shall we take in this dangerous affair that is in our hands? Good chiefs give me council, that I may keep my kingdom, and the heritage of my forefathers; for I cannot enter into strife against the whole Swedish force."

Arnvid the Blind replies, "Sire, it is my advice that you ride down to Aros with such men as will follow you; take your ship there, and go out into the Mæler lake; summon all people to meet you; proceed no longer with haughtiness, but promise every man the law and rights of old established in the country; keep back in this way the message-token, for it cannot as yet, in so short a time, have travelled far through the land. Send, then, those of your men in whom you have the most confidence to those who have this business on hand, and try if this uproar can be appeased."

The king says that he will adopt this advice. "I will," says he, "that ye brothers undertake this business; for I trust to you the most among my men."

[1]Refsithing—a Thing for punishment by penalty or death for crimes and misdemeanours.—L.

Thorvid the Stammerer said, "I remain behind. Let Jacob, your son, go with them, for that is necessary."

Then said Freyvid, "Let us do as Thorvid says: he will not leave you, and I and Arnvid must travel."

This counsel was followed. Olaf went to his ships, and set out into the Mælar lake, and many people came to him. The brothers Arnvid and Freyvid rode out to Ullaraker, and had with them the king's son Jacob; but they kept it a secret that he was there. The brothers observed that there was a great concourse and war-gathering, for the bondes held the Thing night and day. When Arnvid and Freyvid met their relations and friends, they said they would join with the people; and many agreed to leave the management of the business in the hands of the brothers. But all, as one man, declared they would no longer have King Olaf over them, and no longer suffer his unlawful proceedings, and over-weening pride which would not listen to any man's remonstrances, even when the great chiefs spoke the truth to him. When Freyvid observed the heat of the people, he saw in what a bad situation the king's cause was. He summoned the chiefs of the land to a meeting with him, and addressed them thus:—"It appears to me, that if we are to depose Olaf Eirikson from his kingdom, we Swedes of the Uplands should be the leading men in it; for so it has always been, that the counsel which the Upland chiefs have resolved among themselves has always been followed by the men of the rest of the country. Our forefathers did not need to take advice from the West Gautlanders about the government of the Swedes. Now we will not be so degen-

erate as to need Emund to give us counsel; but let us, friends and relations, unite ourselves for the purpose of coming to a determination." All agreed to this, and thought it was well said. Thereafter the people joined this union which the Upland chiefs made among themselves, and Freyvid and Arnvid were chiefs of the whole assemblage. When Emund heard this he suspected how the matter would end, and went to both the brothers to have a conversation with them. Then Freyvid asked Emund, "Who, in your opinion, should we take for king, in case Olaf Eirikson's days are at an end?"

Emund—"He whom we think best suited to it, whether he be of the race of chiefs or not."

Freyvid answers, "We Uplanders will not, in our time, have the kingdom go out of the old race of our ancestors, which has given us kings for a long course of generations, so long as we have so good a choice as now. King Olaf has two sons, one of whom we will choose for king, although there is a great difference between them. The one is noble-born, and of Swedish race on both sides; the other is a slave-woman's son, and of Vindish race on the mother's side."

This decision was received with loud applause, and all would have Jacob for king.

Then said Emund, "Ye Upland Swedes have the power this time to determinate the matter; but I will tell you what will happen:—some of those who now will listen to nothing but that the kingdom remain in the old race will live to see the day when they will wish the kingdom in another race, as being of more advantage."

Thereupon the brothers Freyvid and Arnvid led the king's son Jacob into the Thing, and saluted him with the title of king; and the Swedes gave him the name of Onund, which he afterwards retained as long as he lived. He was then ten or twelve years old. Thereafter King Onund took a court, and chose chiefs to be around him; and they had as many attendants in their suite as were thought necessary, so that he gave the whole assemblage of bondes leave to return home. After that ambassadors went between the two kings; and at last they had a meeting, and came to an agreement. Olaf was to remain king over the country as long as he lived; but should hold peace and be reconciled with King Olaf of Norway, and also with all who had taken part in this business. Onund should also be king, and have a part of the land, such as the father and son should agree upon; but should be bound to support the bondes in case King Olaf did anything which the bondes would not suffer.

97.—MEETING OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE KINGS, AND THEIR GAME AT DICE.

Thereafter ambassadors were sent to Norway to King Olaf, with the errand that he should come with his retinue to a meeting at Konungahella with the Swedish kings, and that the Swedish kings would there confirm their reconciliation. When King Olaf heard this message, he was willing, now as formerly, to enter into the agreement, and proceeded to the appointed place. There the Swedish kings also came; and the relations,

when they met, bound themselves mutually to peace and agreement. Olaf the Swedish king was then remarkably mild in manner, and agreeable to talk with. Thorstein Frode relates of this meeting, that there was an inhabited district in Hising which had sometimes belonged to Norway, and sometimes to Gautland. The kings came to the agreement between themselves that they would cast lots by the dice to determine who should have this property, and that he who threw the highest should have the district. The Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, "Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy, sire, for God Almighty to let them turn up in my favour." Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf king of Norway then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the district was adjudged to the king of Norway. We have heard nothing else of any interest that took place at this meeting; and the kings separated the dearest of friends with each other.

98.—OF OLAF OF NORWAY, AFTER THE MEETING.

After the events now related Olaf returned with his people to Viken. He went first to Tunsberg, and remained there a short time, and then proceeded to the north of the country. In harvest-time he sailed north to Throndhjem, and had winter provision laid in there, and

remained there all winter (1020). Olaf Haraldson was now sole and supreme king of Norway, and the whole of that sovereignty, as Harald Harfager had possessed it, and had the advantage over that monarch of being the only king in the land. By a peaceful agreement he had also recovered that part of the country which Olaf the Swedish king had before occupied; and that part of the country which the Danish king had got he retook by force, and ruled over it as elsewhere in the country. The Danish king Canute ruled at that time both over Denmark and England; but he himself was in England for the most part, and set chiefs over the country in Denmark, without at that time making any claim upon Norway.

99.—HISTORY OF THE EARLS OF ORKNEY.

It is related that in the days of Harald Harfager, the king of Norway, the islands of Orkney, which before had been only a resort for vikings, were settled. The first earl in the Orkney Islands was called Sigurd, who was a son of Eystein Glumra, and brother of Ragnvald earl of More. After Sigurd his son Guthorm was earl for one year. After him Torf-Einar, a son of Ragnvald, took the earldom, and was long earl, and was a man of great power. Halfdan Haleg, a son of Harald Harfager, assaulted Torf-Einar, and drove him from the Orkney Islands; but Einar came back and killed Halfdan in the island Ronaldsha. Thereafter King Harald came with an army to the Orkney Islands. Einar fled to Scotland, and

King Harald made the people of the Orkney Islands give up their udal properties, and hold them under oath from him. Thereafter the king and earl were reconciled, so that the earl became the king's man, and took the country as a fief from him; but that it should pay no scat or feu-duty, as it was at that time much plundered by vikings. The earl paid the king sixty marks of gold; and then King Harald went to plunder in Scotland, as related in the *Glym Drapa*. After Torf-Einar, his sons Arnkel, Erlend, and Thorfin Hausakljufer[1] ruled over these lands. In their days came Eirik Blood-axe from Norway, and subdued these earls. Arnkel and Erlend fell in a war expedition; but Thorfin ruled the country long, and became an old man. His sons were Arnfin, Havard, Hlodver, Liot, and Skule. Their mother was Grelad, a daughter of Earl Dungad of Caithness. Her mother was Groa, a daughter of Thorstein Raud. In the latter days of Earl Thorfin came Eirik Blood-axe's sons, who had fled from Earl Hakon out of Norway, and committed great excesses in Orkney. Earl Thorfin died on a bed of sickness, and his sons after him ruled over the country, and there are many stories concerning them. Hlodver lived the longest of them, and ruled alone over this country. His son was Sigurd the Thick, who took the earldom after him, and became a powerful man and a great warrior. In his days came Olaf Trygvason from his viking expedition in the Western ocean, with his troops, landed in Orkney and took Earl Sigurd prisoner in South Ronaldsha, where he lay with one ship. King Olaf allowed the earl to ran-

[1]Hausakljufer—the splitter of skulls.—L.

som his life by letting himself be baptized, adopting the true faith, becoming his man, and introducing Christianity into all the Orkney Islands. As a hostage, King Olaf took his son, who was called Hunde or Whelp. Then Olaf went to Norway, and became king; and Hunde was several years with King Olaf in Norway, and died there. After his death Earl Sigurd showed no obedience or fealty to King Olaf. He married a daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm, and their son was called Thorfin. Earl Sigurd had, besides, older sons; namely, Sumarlide, Bruse, and Einar Rangmund. Four or five years after Olaf Trygvason's fall Earl Sigurd went to Ireland, leaving his eldest sons to rule the country, and sending Thorfin to his mother's father, the Scottish king. On this expedition Earl Sigurd fell in Brian's battle.[1] When the news was received in Orkney, the brothers Sumarlide, Bruse, and Einar were chosen earls, and the country was divided into three parts among them. Thorfin Sigurdson was five years old when Earl Sigurd fell. When the Scottish king heard of the earl's death he gave his relation Thorfin Caithness and Sutherland, with the title of earl, and appointed good men to rule the land for him. Earl Thorfin was ripe in all ways as soon as he was grown up: he was stout and strong, but ugly; and as soon as he was a grown man it was easy to see that he was a severe and cruel, but a very clever man. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

[1]Brian's battle is supposed to have taken place on the 23d April 1014, at Clontarf, near Dublin; and is known in Irish history as the battle of Clontarf, and was one of the bloodiest of the age. It was fought between a viking called Sigtryg and Brian king of Munster, who gained the victory, but lost his life.—L.

"Under the rim of heaven no other,
So young in years as Einar's brother,
In battle had a braver hand,
Or stouter, to defend the land."

100.—OF THE EARLS EINAR AND BRUSE.

The brothers Einar and Bruse were very unlike in disposition. Bruse was a soft-minded, peaceable man,—sociable, eloquent, and of good understanding. Einar was obstinate, taciturn, and dull; but ambitious, greedy of money, and withal a great warrior. Sumarlide, the eldest of the brothers, was in disposition like Bruse, and lived not long, but died in his bed. After his death Thorfin claimed his share of the Orkney Islands. Einar replied, that Thorfin had the dominions which their father Sigurd had possessed, namely, Caithness and Sutherland, which he insisted were much larger than a third part of Orkney; therefore he would not consent to Thorfin's having any share. Bruse, on the other hand, was willing, he said, to divide with him. "I do not desire," he said, "more than the third part of the land, and which of right belongs to me." Then Einar took possession of two parts of the country, by which he became a powerful man, surrounded by many followers. He was often in summer out on marauding expeditions, and called out great numbers of the people to join him; but it went always unpleasantly with the division of the booty made on his viking cruises. Then the bondes grew weary of all these burdens; but Earl Einar held fast by them with severity, calling in all services laid upon the people, and allowing no opposition from any man; for he was excessively proud and overbearing. And now there came dearth and

scarcity in his lands, in consequence of the services and money outlay exacted from the bondes; while in the part of the country belonging to Bruse there were peace and plenty, and therefore he was the best beloved by the bondes.

101.—OF THORKEL AMUNDASON.

There was a rich and powerful man who was called Amunde, who dwelt in Hrossey at Sandvik, in Hlaupandanes. His son, called Thorkel, was one of the ablest men in the islands. Amunde was a man of the best understanding, and most respected in Orkney. One spring Earl Einar proclaimed a levy for an expedition, as usual. The bondes murmured greatly against it, and applied to Amunde with the entreaty that he would intercede with the earl for them. He replied, that the earl was not a man who would listen to other people, and insisted that it was of no use to make any entreaty to the earl about it. "As things now stand, there is a good understanding between me and the earl; but, in my opinion, there would be much danger of our quarrelling, on account of our different dispositions and views on both sides; therefore I will have nothing to do with it." They then applied to Thorkel, who was also very loath to interfere, but promised at last to do so, in consequence of the great entreaty of the people. Amunde thought he had given his promise too hastily. Now when the earl held a Thing, Thorkel spoke on account of the people, and entreated the earl to spare the people from such heavy burdens, recounting their necessitous condition. The earl replies favourably,

saying that he would take Thorkel's advice. "I had intended to go out from the country with six ships, but now I will only take three with me; but thou must not come again, Thorkel, with any such request." The bondes thanked Thorkel for his assistance, and the earl set out on a viking cruise, and came back in autumn. The spring after, the earl made the same levy as usual, and held a Thing with the bondes. Then Thorkel again made a speech, in which he entreated the earl to spare the people. The earl now was angry, and said the lot of the bondes should be made worse in consequence of his intercession; and worked himself up into such a rage, that he vowed they should not both come next spring to the Thing in a whole skin. Then the thing was closed. When Amunde heard what the earl and Thorkel had said at the Thing, he told Thorkel to leave the country, and he went over to Caithness to Earl Thorfin. Thorkel was afterwards a long time there, and brought up the earl in his youth, and was on that account called Thorkel the Fosterer; and he became a very celebrated man.

102.—THE AGREEMENT OF THE EARLS.

There were many powerful men who fled from their udal properties in Orkney on account of Earl Einar's violence, and the most fled over to Caithness to Earl Thorfin; but some fled from the Orkney Islands to Norway, and some to other countries. When Earl Thorfin was grown up he sent a message to his brother Einar, and demanded the part of the dominion which he thought

belonged to him in Orkney; namely, a third of the islands. Einar was nowise inclined to diminish his possessions. When Thorfin found this he collected a war-force in Caithness, and proceeded to the islands. As soon as Earl Einar heard of this he collected people, and resolved to defend his country. Earl Bruse also collected men, and went out to meet them, and bring about some agreement between them. An agreement was at last concluded, that Thorfin should have a third part of the islands, as of right belonging to him, but that Bruse and Einar should lay their two parts together, and Einar alone should rule over them; but if the one died before the other, the longest liver should inherit the whole. This agreement seemed reasonable, as Bruse had a son called Ragnvald, but Einar had no son. Earl Thorfin set men to rule over his land in Orkney, but he himself was generally in Caithness. Earl Einar was generally on viking expeditions to Ireland, Scotland, and Bretland.

103—EYVIND URARHORN'S MURDER.

One summer (1018) that Earl Einar marauded in Ireland, he fought in Ulfreks-fjord with the Irish king Konofogor, as has been related before, and suffered there a great defeat. The summer after this (1019) Eyvind Urarhorn was coming from the west from Ireland, intending to go to Norway; but the weather was boisterous, and the current against him, so he ran into Osmundwall, and lay there wind-bound for some time. When Earl Einar heard of this, he hastened thither with many peo-

ple, took Eyvind prisoner, and ordered him to be put to death, but spared the lives of most of his people. In autumn they proceeded to Norway to King Olaf, and told him Eyvind was killed. The king said little about it, but one could see that he considered it a great and vexatious loss; for he did not usually say much if anything turned out contrary to his wishes. Earl Thorfin sent Thorkel Fosterer to the islands to gather in his scat. Now, as Einar gave Thorkel the greatest blame for the dispute in which Thorfin had made claim to the islands, Thorkel came suddenly back to Caithness from Orkney, and told Earl Thorfin that he had learnt that Earl Einar would have murdered him if his friends and relations had not given him notice to escape. "Now," says he, "it is come so far between the earl and me, that either something decisive between us must take place if we meet, or I must remove to such a distance that his power will not reach me." The earl encouraged Thorkel much to go east to Norway to King Olaf. "Thou wilt be highly respected," says he, "wherever thou comest among honourable men; and I know so well thy disposition and the earl's, that it will not be long before ye come to extremities." Thereupon Thorkel made himself ready, and proceeded in autumn to Norway, and then to King Olaf, with whom he stayed the whole winter (1020), and was in high favour. The king often entered into conversation with him, and he thought, what was true, that Thorkel was a high-minded man, of good understanding. In his conversations with Thorkel, the king found a great difference in his description of the two earls; for Thorkel

was a great friend of Earl Thorfin, but had much to say against Einar. Early in spring (1020) the king sent a ship west over the sea to Earl Thorfin, with the invitation to come east and visit him in Norway. The earl did not decline the invitation, for it was accompanied by assurances of friendship.

104.—EARL EINAR'S MURDER.

Earl Thorfin went east to Norway, and came to King Olaf, from whom he received a kind reception, and stayed till late in the summer. When he was preparing to return westwards again, King Olaf made him a present of a large and fully-rigged long-ship. Thorkel the Fosterer joined company with the earl, who gave him the ship which he brought with him from the West. The king and the earl took leave of each other tenderly. In autumn Earl Thorfin came to Orkney, and when Earl Einar heard of it he went on board his ships with a numerous band of men. Earl Bruse came up to his two brothers, and endeavoured to mediate between them, and a peace was concluded and confirmed by oath. Thorkel Fosterer was to be in peace and friendship with Earl Einar; and it was agreed that each of them should give a feast to the other, and that the earl should first be Thorkel's guest at Sandwick. When the earl came to the feast he was entertained in the best manner; but the earl was not cheerful. There was a great room, in which there were doors at each end. The day the earl should depart Thorkel was to accompany him to the other feast; and Thorkel

sent men before, who should examine the road they had to travel that day. The spies came back, and said to Thorkel they had discovered three ambushes. "And we think," said they, "there is deceit on foot." When Thorkel heard this he lengthened out his preparations for the journey, and gathered people about him. The earl told him to get ready, as it was time to be on horseback. Thorkel answered, that he had many things to put in order first, and went out and in frequently. There was a fire upon the floor. At last he went in at one door, followed by an Iceland man from Eastfjord, called Halvard, who locked the door after him. Thorkel went in between the fire and the place where the earl was sitting. The earl asked, "Art thou ready at last, Thorkel?"

Thorkel answers, "Now I am ready;" and struck the earl upon the head so that he fell upon the floor.

Then said the Icelander, "I never saw people so foolish as not to drag the earl out of the fire;" and took a stick, which he set under the earl's neck, and put him upright on the bench. Thorkel and his two comrades then went in all haste out of the other door opposite to that by which they went in, and Thorkel's men were standing without fully armed. The earl's men now went in, and took hold of the earl. He was already dead, so nobody thought of avenging him: and also the whole was done so quickly; for nobody expected such a deed from Thorkel, and all supposed that there really was, as before related, a friendship fixed between the earl and Thorkel. The most who were within were unarmed, and they were partly Thorkel's good friends; and to this may be added, that

fate had decreed a longer life to Thorkel. When Thorkel came out he had not fewer men with him than the earl's troop. Thorkel went to his ship, and the earl's men went their way. The same day Thorkel sailed out eastwards into the sea. This happened after winter; but he came safely to Norway, went as fast as he could to Olaf, and was well received by him. The king expressed his satisfaction at this deed, and Thorkel was with him all winter (1021).

105.—AGREEMENT BETWEEN KING OLAF AND EARL BRUSE.

After Earl Einar's fall Bruse took the part of the country which he had possessed; for it was known to many men on what conditions Einar and Bruse had entered into a partnership. Although Thorfin thought it would be more just that each of them had half of the islands, Bruse retained the two-thirds of the country that winter (1021). In spring, however, Thorfin produced his claim, and demanded the half of the country; but Bruse would not consent. They held Things and meetings about the business; and although their friends endeavoured to settle it, Thorfin would not be content with less than the half of the islands, and insisted that Bruse, with his disposition, would have enough even with a third part. Bruse replies, "When I took my heritage after my father I was well satisfied with a third part of the country, and there was nobody to dispute it with me; and now I have succeeded to another third in heritage after my brother, according to a lawful agreement between us;

and although I am not powerful enough to maintain a feud against thee, my brother, I will seek some other way, rather than willingly renounce my property." With this their meeting ended. But Bruse saw that he had no strength to contend against Thorfin, because Thorfin had both a greater dominion and also could have aid from his mother's brother, the Scottish king. He resolved, therefore, to go out of the country; and he went eastward to King Olaf, and had with him his son Ragnvald, then ten years old. When the earl came to the king he was well received. The earl now declared his errand, and told the king the circumstances of the whole dispute between him and his brother, and asked help to defend his kingdom of Orkney; promising, in return, the fullest friendship towards King Olaf. In his answer, the king began with showing how Harald Harfager had appropriated to himself all udal rights in Orkney, and that the earls, since that time, have constantly held the country as a fief, not as their udal property. "As a sufficient proof of which," said he, "when Eirik Blood-axe and his sons were in Orkney the earls were subject to them; and also when my relation Olaf Trygvason came there thy father, Earl Sigurd, became his man. Now I have taken heritage after King Olaf, and I will give thee the condition to become my man, and then I will give thee the islands as a fief; and we shall try if I cannot give thee aid that will be more to the purpose than Thorfin can get from the Scottish king. If thou wilt not accept of these terms, then will I win back my udal property there in the West, as our forefathers and relations of old possessed it."

The earl carefully considered this speech, laid it before his friends, and demanded their advice if he should agree to it, and enter into such terms with King Olaf and become his vassal. "But I do not see what my lot will be at my departure if I say no; for the king has clearly enough declared his claim upon Orkney; and from his great power, and our being in his hands, it is easy for him to make our destiny what he pleases."

Although the earl saw that there was much to be considered for and against it, he chose the condition to deliver himself and his dominion into the king's power. Thereupon the king took the earl's power, and the government over all the earl's lands, and the earl became his vassal under oath of fealty.

106—THE EARL'S AGREEMENT TO THE KING'S TERMS.

Thorfin the earl heard that his brother Bruse had gone east to King Olaf to seek support from him; but as Thorfin had been on a visit to King Olaf before, and had concluded a friendship with him, he thought his case would stand well with the king, and that many would support it; but he believed that many more would do so if he went there himself. Earl Thorfin resolved, therefore, to go east himself without delay; and he thought there would be so little difference between the time of his arrival and Bruse's, that Bruse's errand could not be accomplished before he came to King Olaf. But it went otherwise than Earl Thorfin had expected; for when he came to the king the agreement between the king and Bruse was al-

ready concluded and settled, and Earl Thorfin did not know a word about Bruse's having surrendered his udal domains until he came to King Olaf. As soon as Earl Thorfin and King Olaf met, the king made the same demand upon the kingdom of Orkney that he had done to Earl Bruse, and required that Thorfin should voluntarily deliver over to the king that part of the country which he had possessed hitherto. The earl answered in a friendly and respectful way, that the king's friendship lay near to his heart: "And if you think, sire, that my help against other chiefs can be of use, you have already every claim to it; but I cannot be your vassel for service, as I am an earl of the Scottish king, and owe fealty to him."

As the king found that the earl, by his answer, declined fulfilling the demand he had made, he said, "Earl, if thou wilt not become my vassal, there is another condition; namely, that I will place over the Orkney Islands the man I please, and require thy oath that thou wilt make no claim upon these lands, but allow whoever I place over them to sit in peace. If thou wilt not accept of either of these conditions, he who is to rule over these lands may expect hostility from thee, and thou must not think it strange if like meet like in this business."

The earl begged of the king some time to consider the matter. The king did so, and gave the earl time to take the counsel of his friends on the choosing one or other of these conditions. Then the earl requested a delay until next summer, that he might go over the sea to the west, for his proper counsellors were all at home, and he himself was but a child in respect of age; but the king re-

quired that he should now make his election of one or other of the conditions. Thorkel Fosterer was then with the king, and he privately sent a person to Earl Thorfin, and told him, whatever his intentions might be, not to think of leaving Olaf without being reconciled with him, as he stood entirely in Olaf's power. From such hints the earl saw there was no other way than to let the king have his own will. It was no doubt a hard condition to have no hope of ever regaining his paternal heritage, and moreover to bind himself by oath to allow those to enjoy in peace his domain who had no hereditary right to it; but seeing it was uncertain how he could get away, he resolved to submit to the king and become his vassal, as Bruse had done. The king observed that Thorfin was more high-minded, and less disposed to suffer subjection than Bruse, and therefore he trusted less to Thorfin than to Bruse; and he considered also that Thorfin would trust to the aid of the Scottish king, if he broke the agreement. The king also had discernment enough to perceive that Bruse, although slow to enter into an agreement, would promise nothing but what he intended to keep; but as to Thorfin, when he had once made up his mind he went readily into every proposal, and made no attempt to obtain any alteration of the king's first conditions: therefore the king had his suspicions that the earl would infringe the agreement.

107.—EARL THORFIN'S DEPARTURE, AND RECONCILIATION WITH THORKEL.

When the king had carefully considered the whole mat-

ter by himself, he ordered the signal to sound for a General Thing, to which he called in the earls. Then said the king, "I will now make known to the public our agreement with the Orkney earls. They have now acknowledged my right of property to Orkney and Shetland, and have both become my vassals, all which they have confirmed by oath; and now I will invest them with these lands as a fief: namely, Bruse with one third part and Thorfin with one third, as they formerly enjoyed them; but the other third which Einar Rangmund had, I adjudge as fallen to my domain, because he killed Eyvind Urarhorn, my court-man, partner, and dear friend; and that part of the land I will manage as I think proper. I have also my earls, to tell you it is my pleasure that ye enter into an agreement with Thorkel Amundason for the murder of your brother Einar, for I will take that business, if ye agree thereto, within my own jurisdiction." The earls agreed to this, as to everything else that the king proposed. Thorkel came forward, and surrendered to the king's judgment of the case, and the Thing concluded. King Olaf awarded as great a penalty for Earl Einar's murder as for three lendermen; but as Einar himself was the cause of the act, one third of the mulct fell to the ground. Thereafter Earl Thorfin asked the king's leave to depart, and as soon as he obtained it made ready for sea with all speed. It happened one day, when all was ready for the voyage, the earl sat in his ship drinking; and Thorkel Amundason came unexpectedly to him, laid his head upon the earl's knee, and bade him do with him what he pleased. The earl asked why he did

so. "We are, you know, reconciled men, according to the king's decision; so stand up, Thorkel."

Thorkel replied, "The agreement which the king made as between me and Bruse stands good; but what regards the agreement with thee thou alone must determine. Although the king made conditions for my property and safe residence in Orkney, yet I know so well thy disposition that there is no going to the islands for me, unless I go there in peace with thee, Earl Thorfin; and therefore I am willing to promise never to return to Orkney, whatever the king may desire."

The earl remained silent; and first, after a long pause, he said, "If thou wilt rather, Thorkel, that I shall judge between us than trust to the king's judgment, then let the beginning of our reconciliation be, that you go with me to the Orkney Islands, live with me, and never leave me but with my will, and be bound to defend my land, and execute all that I want done, as long as we both are in life."

Thorkel replies, "This shall be entirely at thy pleasure, earl, as well as everything else in my power." Then Thorkel went on, and solemnly ratified this agreement. The earl said he would talk afterwards about the mulct of money, but took Thorkel's oath upon the conditions. Thorkel immediately made ready to accompany the earl on his voyage. The earl set off as soon as all was ready, and never again were King Olaf and Thorfin together.

108.—EARL BRUSE'S DEPARTURE.

Earl Bruse remained behind, and took his time to get

ready. Before his departure the king sent for him, and said, "It appears to me, earl, that in thee I have a man on the west side of the sea on whose fidelity I can depend; therefore I intend to give thee the two parts of the country which thou formerly hadst to rule over; for I will not that thou shouldst be a less powerful man after entering into my service than before: but I will secure thy fidelity by keeping thy son Ragnvald with me. I see well enough that with two parts of the country and my help, thou wilt be able to defend what is thy own against thy brother Thorfin." Bruse was thankful for getting two thirds instead of one third of the country, and soon after he set out, and came about autumn to Orkney; but Ragnvald, Bruse's son, remained behind in the East with King Olaf. Ragnvald was one of the handsomest men that could be seen,—his hair long, and yellow as silk; and he soon grew up, stout and tall, and he was a very able and superb man, both of great understanding and polite manners. He was long with King Olaf. Otter Svarte speaks of these affairs in the poem he composed about King Olaf:—

"From Shetland, far off in the cold North sea,
Come chiefs who desire to be subject to thee:
No king so well known for his will, and his might,
To defend his own people from scaith or unright.
These isles of the West midst the ocean's wild roar,
Scarcely heard the voice of their sovereign before;
Our bravest of sovereigns before could scarce bring
These islesmen so proud to acknowledge their king."

109.—OF THE EARLS THORFIN AND BRUSE.

The brothers Thorfin and Bruse came west to Orkney; and Bruse took the two parts of the country under his rule, and Thorfin the third part. Thorfin was usually in

Caithness and elsewhere in Scotland; but placed men of his own over the islands. It was left to Bruse alone to defend the islands, which at that time were severely scourged by vikings; for the Northmen and Danes went much on viking cruises in the West sea, and frequently touched at Orkney on the way to or from the West, and plundered, and took provisions and cattle from the coast. Bruse often complained of his brother Thorfin, that he made no equipment of war for the defence of Orkney and Shetland, yet levied his share of the scat and duties. Then Thorfin offered to him to exchange, and that Bruse should have one third and Thorfin two thirds of the land, but should undertake the defence of the land, for the whole. Although this exchange did not take place immediately, it is related in the saga of the earls that it was agreed upon at last; and that Thorfin had two parts and Bruse only one, when Canute the Great subdued Norway and King Olaf fled the country. Earl Thorfin Sigurdson has been the ablest earl of these islands, and has had the greatest dominion of all the Orkney earls; for he had under him Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebudes, besides very great possessions in Scotland and Ireland. Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of his possessions:—

"From Thurso-skerry to Dublin, All people love his sway,
All people hold with good Thorfin— And the generous chief obey."

Thorfin was a very great warrior. He came to the earldom at five years of age, ruled more than sixty years, and died in his bed about the last days of Harald Sigurdson. But Bruse died in the days of Canute the Great, a short time after the fall of Saint Olaf.

110.—OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

Having now gone through this second story, we shall return to that which we left,—at King Olaf Haraldson having concluded peace with King Olaf the Swedish king, and having the same summer gone north to Throndhjem (1019). He had then been king in Norway five years (1015-1019). In harvest time he prepared to take his winter residence at Nidaros, and he remained all winter there (1020). Thorkel the Fosterer, Amunde's son, as before related, was all that winter with him. King Olaf inquired very carefully how it stood with Christianity throughout the land, and learnt that it was not observed at all to the north of Halogaland, and was far from being observed as it should be in Naumudal, and the interior of Throndhjem. There was a man by name Harek, a son of Eyvind Skaldaspiller, who dwelt in an island called Thjotta in Halogaland. Eyvind had not been a rich man, but was of high family and high mind. In Thjotta, at first, there dwelt many small bondes; but Harek began with buying a farm not very large and lived on it, and in a few years he had got all the bondes that were there before out of the way; so that he had the whole island, and built a large head-mansion. He soon became very rich; for he was a very prudent man, and very successful. He had long been greatly respected by the chiefs; and being related to the kings of Norway, had been raised by them to high dignities. Harek's father's mother, Gunhild, was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and Ingebjorg, Harald Harfager's daugh-

ter. At the time the circumstance happened which we are going to relate he was somewhat advanced in years. Harek was the most respected man in Halogaland, and for a long time had the Lapland trade, and did the king's business in Lapland; sometimes alone, sometimes with others joined to him. He had not himself been to wait on King Olaf, but messages had passed between them, and all was on the most friendly footing. This winter (1020) that Olaf was in Nidaros, messengers passed between the king and Harek of Thjotta. Then the king made it known that he intended going north to Halogaland, and as far north as the land's end; but the people of Halogaland expected no good from this expedition.

111.—OF THE PEOPLE OF HALOGALAND.

Olaf rigged out five ships in spring (1020), and had with him about 300 men. When he was ready for sea he set northwards along the land; and when he came to Naumudal district he summoned the bondes to a Thing, and at every Thing was accepted as king. He also made the laws to be read there as elsewhere, by which the people are commanded to observe Christianity; and he threatened every man with loss of life, and limbs, and property, who would not subject himself to Christian law. He inflicted severe punishments on many men, great as well as small, and left no district until the people had consented to adopt the holy faith. The most of the men of power and of the great bondes made feasts for the king, and so he proceeded all the way north to Halogaland. Harek

of Thjotta also made a feast for the king, at which there was a great multitude of guests, and the feast was very splendid. Harek was made lenderman, and got the same privileges he had enjoyed under the former chiefs of the country.

112.—OF ASMUND GRANKELSON.

There was a man called Grankel, or Granketil, who was a rich bonde, and at this time rather advanced in age. In his youth he had been on viking cruises, and had been a powerful fighter; for he possessed great readiness in all sorts of bodily exercises. His son Asmund was equal to his father in all these, and in some, indeed, he excelled him. There were many who said that with respect to comeliness, strength, and bodily expertness, he might be considered the third remarkably distinguished for these that Norway had ever produced. The first was Hakon Athelstan's foster-son; the second, Olaf Trygvason. Grankel invited King Olaf to a feast, which was very magnificent; and at parting Grankel presented the king with many honourable gifts and tokens of friendship. The king invited Asmund, with many persuasions, to follow him; and as Asmund could not decline the honours offered him, he got ready to travel with the king, became his man, and stood in high favour with him. The king remained in Halogaland the greater part of the summer, went to all the Things, and baptized all the people. Thorer Hund dwelt at that time in the island Bjarkey. He was the most powerful man in the North, and also became one of Olaf's lendermen. Many sons of great

bondes resolved also to follow King Olaf from Halogaland. Towards the end of summer King Olaf left the North, and sailed back to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros, where he passed the winter (1021). It was then that Thorkel the Fosterer came from the West from Orkney, after killing Einar Rangmund, as before related. This autumn corn was dear in Throndhjem, after a long course of good seasons, and the farther north the dearer was the corn; but there was corn enough in the East country, and in the Uplands, and it was of great help to the people of Throndhjem that many had old corn remaining beside them.

113.—OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

In autumn the news was brought to King Olaf that the bondes had had a great feast on the first winter-day's eve, at which there was a numerous attendance and much drinking; and it was told the king that all the remembrance-cups to the Asas, or old gods, were blessed according to the old heathen forms; and it was added, that cattle and horses had been slain, and the altars sprinkled with their blood, and the sacrifices accompanied with the prayer that was made to obtain good seasons. It was also reported, that all men saw clearly that the gods were offended at the Halogaland people turning Christian. Now when the king heard this news he sent men into the Throndhjem country, and ordered several bondes, whose names he gave, to appear before him. There was a man called Olver of Eggja, so called after his farm on which

he lived. He was powerful, of great family, and the head-man of those who on account of the bondes appeared before the king. Now, when they came to the king, he told them these accusations; to which Olver, on behalf of the bondes, replied, that they had had no other feasts that harvest than their usual entertainments, and social meetings, and friendly drinking parties. "But as to what may have been told you of the words which may have fallen from us Throndhjem people in our drinking parties, men of understanding would take good care not to use such language; but I cannot hinder drunken or foolish people's talk." Olver was a man of clever speech, and bold in what he said, and defended the bondes against such accusations. In the end, the king said the people of the interior of Thorndhjem must themselves give the best testimony to their being in the right faith. The bondes got leave to return home, and set off as soon as they were ready.

114.—OF THE SACRIFICES BY THE PEOPLE OF THE INTERIOR OF THE THRONDHJEM DISTRICT.

Afterwards, when winter was advanced, it was told the king that the people of the interior of Throndhjem had assembled in great number at Mærin, and that there was a great sacrifice in the middle of winter, at which they sacrificed offerings for peace and a good season. Now when the king knew this on good authority to be true, he sent men and messages into the interior, and summoned the bondes whom he thought of most understand-

ing into the town. The bondes held a council among themselves about this message; and all those who had been upon the same occasion in the beginning of winter were now very unwilling to make the journey. Olver, however, at the desire of all the bondes, allowed himself to be persuaded. When he came to the town he went immediately before the king, and they talked together. The king made the same accusation against the bondes, that they had held a mid-winter sacrifice. Olver replies, that this accusation against the bondes was false. "We had," said he, "Yule feasts and drinking feasts wide around in the districts; and the bondes do not prepare their feasts so sparingly, sire, that there is not much left over, which people consume long afterwards. At Mærin there is a great farm, with a large house on it, and a great neighbourhood all around it, and it is the great delight of the people to drink many together in company." The king said little in reply, but looked angry, as he thought he knew the truth of the matter better than it was now represented. He ordered the bondes to return home. "I shall some time or other," said he, "come to the truth of what you are now concealing, and in such a way that ye shall not be able to contradict it. But, however, that may be, do not try such things again." The bondes returned home, and told the result of their journey, and that the king was altogether enraged.

115.—MURDER OF OLVER OF EGGJA.

At Easter (1021) the king held a feast, to which he had

invited many of the townspeople as well as bondes. After Easter he ordered his ships to be launched into the water, oars and tackle to be put on board, decks to be laid in the ships, and tilts[1] and rigging to be set up, and to be laid ready for sea at the piers. Immediately after Easter he sent men into Veradal. There was a man called Thoralde, who was the king's bailiff, and who managed the king's farm there at Haug; and to him the king sent a message to come to him as quickly as possible. Thoralde did not decline the journey, but went immediately to the town with the messenger. The king called him in and in a private conversation asked him what truth there was in what had been told him of the principles and living of the people of the interior of Throndhjem, and if it really was so that they practised sacrifices to heathen gods. "I will," says the king, "that thou declare to me the things as they are, and as thou knowest to be true; for it is thy duty to tell me the truth, as thou art my man."

Thoralde replies, "Sire, I will first tell you that I have brought here to the town my two children, my wife, and all my loose property that I could take with me, and if thou desirest to know the truth it shall be told according to thy command; but if I declare it, thou must take care of me and mine."

The king replies, "Say only what is true on what I ask thee, and I will take care that no evil befall thee."

Then said Thoralde, "If I must say the truth, king,

[1]The ships appear to have been decked fore and aft only; and in the middle, where the rowers sat, to have had tilts or tents set up at night to sleep under.—L.

as it is, I must declare that in the interior of the Throndhjem land almost all the people are heathen in faith, although some of them are baptized. It is their custom to offer sacrifice in autumn for a good winter, a second at mid-winter, and a third in summer. In this the people of Eyna, Sparby, Veradal, and Skaun partake. There are twelve men who preside over these sacrifice-feasts; and in spring it is Olver who has to get the feast in order, and he is now busy transporting to Mærin everything needful for it." Now when the king had got to the truth with a certainty, he ordered the signal to be sounded for his men to assemble, and for the men-at-arms to go on board ship. He appointed men to steer the ships, and leaders for the people, and ordered how the people should be divided among the vessels. All was got ready in haste, and with five ships and 300 men he steered up the fjord. The wind was favourable, the ships sailed briskly before it, and nobody could have thought that the king would be so soon there. The king came in the night time to Mærin, and immediately surrounded the house with a ring of armed men. Olver was taken, and the king ordered him to be put to death, and many other men besides. Then the king took all the provision for the feast, and had it brought to his ships; and also all the goods, both furniture, clothes, and valuables, which the people had brought there, and divided the booty among his men. The king also let all the bondes he thought had the greatest part in the business be plundered by his men-at-arms. Some were taken prisoners and laid in irons, some ran away, and many were robbed

of their goods. Thereafter the bondes were summoned to a Thing; but because he had taken many powerful men prisoners, and held them in his power, their friends and relations resolved to promise obedience to the king, so that there was no insurrection against the king on this occasion. He thus brought the whole people back to the right faith, gave them teachers, and built and consecrated churches. The king let Olver lie without fine paid for his bloodshed, and all that he possessed was adjudged to the king; and of the men he judged the most guilty, some he ordered to be executed, some he maimed, some he drove out of the country, and took fines from others. The king then returned to Nidaros.

116.—OF THE SONS OF ARNE.

There was a man called Arne Arnmodson, who was married to Thora, Thorstein Galge's daughter. Their children were Kalf, Fin, Thorberg, Amunde, Kolbjorn, Arnbjorn, and Arne. Their daughter, who was called Ragnhild, was married to Harek of Thjotta. Arne was a lenderman, powerful, and of ability, and a great friend of King Olaf. At that time his sons Kalf and Fin were with the king, and in great favour. The wife whom Olver of Eggja had left was young and handsome, of great family, and rich, so that he who got her might be considered to have made an excellent marriage; and her land was in the gift of the king. She and Olver had two sons, who were still in infancy. Kalf Arneson begged of the king that he would give him to wife the widow

of Olver; and out of friendship the king agreed to it, and with her he got all the property Olver had possessed. The king at the same time made him his lenderman, and gave him an office in the interior of the Throndhjem country. Kalf became a great chief, and was a man of very great understanding.

117.—KING OLAF'S JOURNEY TO THE UPLANDS.

When King Olaf had been seven years (1015-1021) in Norway the earls Thorfin and Bruse came to him, as before related, in the summer, from Orkney, and he became master of their land. The same summer Olaf went to North and South More, and in autumn to Raumsdal. He left his ships there, and came to the Uplands, and to Lesjar. Here he laid hold of all the best men, and forced them, both at Lesjar and Dovre, either to receive Christianity or suffer death, if they were not so lucky as to escape. After they received Christianity, the king took their sons in his hands as hostages for their fidelity. The king stayed several nights at a farm in Lesjar called Boar, where he placed priests. Then he proceeded over Orkadal and Lorodal, and came down from the Uplands at a place called Stafabrekka. There a river runs along the valley, called the Otta, and a beautiful hamlet, by name Loar, lies on both sides of the river, and the king could see far down over the whole neighbourhood. "A pity it is," said the king, "so beautiful a hamlet should be burnt." And he proceeded down the valley with his people, and was all night on a farm called Nes. The king

took his lodging in a loft, where he slept himself; and it stands to the present day, without anything in it having been altered since. The king was five days there, and summoned by message-token the people to a Thing, both for the districts of Vagar, Loar, and Hedal; and gave out the message along with the token, that they must either receive Christianity and give their sons as hostages, or see their habitations burnt. They came before the king, and submitted to his pleasure; but some fled south down the valley.

118.—THE STORY OF DALE-GUDBRAND.

There was a man called Dale-Gudbrand, who was like a king in the valley (Gudbrandsdal), but was only herse in title. Sigvat the skald compared him for wealth and landed property to Erling Skjalgson. Sigvat sang thus concerning Erling:—

"I know but one who can compare
With Erling for broad lands and gear—
Gudbrand is he, whose wide domains
Are most like where some small king reigns.
These two great bondes, I would say,
Equal each other every way.
He lies who says that he can find
One by the other left behind."

Gudbrand had a son, who is here spoken of. Now when Gudbrand received the tidings that King Olaf was come to Loar, and obliged people to accept Christianity, he sent out a message-token, and summoned all the men in the valley to meet him at a farm called Hundthorp. All came, so that the number could not be told; for there is a lake in the neighbourhood called Laugen, so that people could come to the place both by land and by water.

There Gudbrand held a Thing with them, and said, "A man is come to Loar who is called Olaf, and will force upon us another faith than what we had before, and will break in pieces all our gods. He says that he has a much greater and more powerful god; and it is wonderful that the earth does not burst asunder under him, or that our god lets him go about unpunished when he dares to talk such things. I know this for certain, that if we carry Thor, who has always stood by us, out of our temple that is standing upon this farm, Olaf's god will melt away, and he and his men be made nothing so soon as Thor looks upon them." Then the bondes all shouted as one person that Olaf should never get away with life if he came to them; and they thought he would never dare to come farther south through the valley. They chose out 700 men to go northwards to Breida, to watch his movements. The leader of this band was Gudbrand's son, eighteen years of age, and with him were many other men of importance. When they came to a farm called Hof they heard of the king; and they remained three nights there. People streamed to them from all parts, from Lesjar, Loar, and Vagar, who did not wish to receive Christianity. The king and Bishop Sigurd fixed teachers in Loar and in Vagar. From thence they went round Vagarost, and came down into the valley at Sil, where they stayed all night, and heard the news that a great force of men were assembled against them. The bondes who were in Breida heard also of the king's arrival, and prepared for battle. As soon as the king arose in the morning he put on his armour, and went southwards

over the Sil plains, and did not halt until he came to Breida, where he saw a great army ready for battle. Then the king drew up his troops, rode himself at the head of them, and began a speech to the bondes, in which he invited them to adopt Christianity. They replied, "We shall give thee something else to do to-day than to be mocking us;" and raised a general shout, striking also upon their shields with their weapons. Then the king's men ran forward and threw their spears; but the bondes turned round instantly and fled, so that only few men remained behind. Gudbrand's son was taken prisoner; but the king gave him his life, and took him with him. The king was four days here. Then the king said to Gudbrand's son, "Go home now to thy father, and tell him I expect to be with him soon."

He went accordingly, and told his father the news, that they had fallen in with the king, and fought with him; but that their whole army, in the very beginning, took flight. "I was taken prisoner," said he, "but the king gave me my life and liberty, and told me to say to thee that he will soon be here. And now we have not 200 men of the force we raised against him; therefore I advise thee, father, not to give battle to that man."

Says Gudbrand, "It is easy to see that all courage has left thee, and it was an unlucky hour ye went out to the field. Thy proceeding will live long in the remembrance of people, and I see that thy fastening thy faith on the folly that man is going about with has brought upon thee and thy men so great a disgrace."

But the night after, Gudbrand dreamt that there came

to him a man surrounded by light, who brought great terror with him, and said to him, "Thy son made no glorious expedition against King Olaf; but still less honour wilt thou gather for thyself by holding a battle with him. Thou with all thy people wilt fall; wolves will drag thee, and all thine, away; ravens wilt tear thee in stripes." At this dreadful vision he was much afraid, and tells it to Thord Istermage, who was chief over the valley. He replies, "The very same vision came to me." In the morning they ordered the signal to sound for a Thing, and said that it appeared to them advisable to hold a Thing with the man who had come from the north with this new teaching, to know if there was any truth in it. Gudbrand then said to his son, "Go thou, and twelve men with thee, to the king who gave thee thy life." He went straightway, and found the king, and laid before him their errand; namely, that the bondes would hold a Thing with him, and make a truce between them and him. The king was content; and they bound themselves by faith and law mutually to hold the peace so long as the Thing lasted. After this was settled the men returned to Gudbrand and Thord, and told them there was made a firm agreement for a truce. The king, after the battle with the son of Gudbrand, had proceeded to Lidstad, and remained there for five days: afterwards he went out to meet the bondes, and hold a Thing with them. On that day there fell a heavy rain. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said that the people in Lesjar, Loar, and Vagar had received Christianity, broken down their houses of sacrifice, and believed now in the true

God who had made heaven and earth and knows all things.

Thereupon the king sat down, and Gudbrand replies, "We know nothing of him whom thou speakest about. Dost thou call him God, whom neither thou nor any one else can see? But we have a god who can be seen every day, although he is not out to-day, because the weather is wet, and he will appear to thee terrible and very grand; and I expect that fear will mix with your very blood when he comes into the Thing. But since thou sayest thy God is so great, let him make it so that to-morrow we have a cloudy day but without rain, and then let us meet again."

The king accordingly returned home to his lodging, taking Gudbrand's son as a hostage; but he gave them a man as hostage in exchange. In the evening the king asked Gudbrand's son what like their god was. He replied, that he bore the likeness of Thor; had a hammer in his hand; was of great size, but hollow within; and had a high stand, upon which he stood when he was out. "Neither gold nor silver are wanting about him, and every day he receives four cakes of bread, besides meat." They then went to bed, but the king watched all night in prayer. When day dawned the king went to mass, then to table, and from thence to the Thing. The weather was such as Gudbrand desired. Now the bishop stood up in his choir-robes, with bishop's coif upon his head, and bishop's staff in his hands. He spoke to the bondes of the true faith, told the many wonderful acts of God, and concluded his speech well.

Thord Istermage replies, "Many things we are told of by this horned man with the staff in his hand crooked at the top like a ram's horn; but since ye say, comrades, that your god is so powerful, and can do so many wonders, tell him to make it clear sunshine to-morrow forenoon, and then we shall meet here again, and do one of two things,—either agree with you about this business, or fight you." And they separated for the day.

119.—DALE-GUDBRAND IS BAPTIZED.

There was a man with King Olaf called Kolbein Sterke (the strong), who came from a family in the Fjord district. Usually he was so equipped that he was girt with a sword, and besides carried a great stake, otherwise called a club, in his hands. The king told Kolbein to stand nearest to him in the morning; and gave orders to his people to go down in the night to where the ships of the bondes lay and bore holes in them, and to set loose their horses on the farms where they were; all which was done. Now the king was in prayer all the night, beseeching God of His goodness and mercy to release him from evil. When mass was ended, and morning was grey, the king went to the Thing. When he came there some bondes had already arrived, and they saw a great crowd coming along, and bearing among them a huge man's image glancing with gold and silver. When the bondes who were at the Thing saw it they started up, and bowed themselves down before the ugly idol. Thereupon it was set down upon the Thing-field; and on

the one side of it sat the bondes, and on the other the king and his people.

Then Dale-Gudbrand stood up, and said, "Where now, king, is thy god? I think he will now carry his head lower; and neither thou, nor the man with the horn whom ye call bishop, and sits there beside thee, are so bold to-day as on the former days; for now our god, who rules over all, is come, and looks on you with an angry eye: and now I see well enough that ye are terrified, and scarcely dare to raise your eyes. Throw away now all your opposition, and believe in the god who has all your fate in his hands."

The king now whispers to Kolbein Sterke, without the bondes perceiving it, "If it come so in the course of my speech that the bondes look another way than towards their idol, strike him as hard as thou canst with thy club."

The king then stood up and spoke. "Much hast thou talked to us this morning, and greatly hast thou wondered that thou canst not see our God; but we expect that he will soon come to us. Thou wouldst frighten us with thy god, who is both blind and deaf, and can neither save himself nor others, and cannot even move about without being carried; but now I expect it will be but a short time before he meets his fate: for turn your eyes towards the east,—behold our God advancing in great light."

The sun was rising, and all turned to look. At that moment Kolbein gave their god a stroke, so that the idol burst asunder; and there ran out of it mice as big almost as cats, and reptiles, and adders. The bondes were so

terrified that some fled to their ships; but when they sprang out upon them they filled with water, and could not get away. Others ran to their horses, but could not find them. The king then ordered the bondes to be called together, saying he wanted to speak with them; on which the bondes came back, and the Thing was again seated.

The king rose up and said, "I do not understand what your noise and running mean. Ye see yourselves what your god can do,—the idol ye adorned with gold and silver, and brought meat and provisions to. Ye see now that the protecting powers who used it were the mice and adders, reptiles and paddocks; and they do ill who trust to such, and will not abandon this folly. Take now your gold and ornaments that are lying strewed about on the grass, and give them to your wives and daughters; but never hang them hereafter upon stock or stone. Here are now two conditions between us to choose upon,—either accept Christianity, or fight this very day; and the victory be to them to whom the God we worship gives it."

Then Dale-Gudbrand stood up and said, "We have sustained great damage upon our god; but since he will not help us, we will believe in the God thou believest in."

Then all received Christianity. The bishop baptized Gudbrand and his son. King Olaf and Bishop Sigurd left behind them teachers, and they who met as enemies parted as friends; and Gudbrand built a church in the valley.

120.—HEDEMARK BAPTIZED.

King Olaf proceeded from thence to Hedemark, and

baptized there; but as he had formerly carried away their kings as prisoners, he did not venture himself, after such a deed, to go far into the country with few people at that time, but a small part of Hedemark was baptized; but the king did not desist from his expedition before he had introduced Christianity over all Hedemark, consecrated churches, and placed teachers. He then went to Hadaland and Thoten, improving the customs of the people, and persisting until all the country was baptized. He then went to Ringerike, where also all people went over to Christianity. The people of Raumarike then heard that Olaf intended coming to them, and they gathered a great force. They said among themselves that the journey Olaf had made among them the last time was not to be forgotten, and he should never proceed so again. The king, notwithstanding, prepared for the journey. Now when the king went up into Raumarike with his forces, the multitude of bondes came against him at a river called Nitja; and the bondes had a strong army, and began the battle as soon as they met; but they soon fell short, and took to flight. They were forced by this battle into a better disposition, and immediately received Christianity; and the king scoured the whole district, and did not leave it until all the people were made Christians. He then went east to Soleys, and baptized that neighbourhood. The skald Ottar Black came to him there, and begged to be received among his men. Olaf the Swedish king had died the winter before (1021), and Onund, the son of Olaf, was now the sole king over all Sweden. King Olaf returned, when the winter (1022) was far advanced,

to Raumarike. There he assembled a numerous Thing, at a place where the Eidsvold Things have since been held. He made a law, that the Upland people should resort to this Thing, and that Eidsvold laws should be good through all the districts of the Uplands, and wide around in other quarters, which also has taken place. As spring was advancing, he rigged his ships, and went by sea to Tunsberg. He remained there during the spring, and the time the town was most frequented, and goods from other countries were brought to the town for sale. There had been a good year in Viken, and tolerable as far north as Stad; but it was a very dear time in all the country north of there.

121.—RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND EINAR.

In spring (1022) King Olaf sent a message west to Agder, and north all the way to Hordaland and Rogaland, prohibiting the exporting or selling of corn, malt, or meal; adding, that he, as usual, would come there with his people in guest-quarters. The message went round all the districts; but the king remained in Viken all summer, and went east to the boundary of the country. Einar Tambaskelfer had been with the Swedish king Olaf since the death of his relation Earl Svein, and had, as the king's man, received great fiefs from him. Now that the king was dead, Einar had a great desire to come into friendly agreement with Olaf; and the same spring messages passed between them about it. While the king was lying in the Gaut river, Einar Tambaskelfer came

there with some men; and after treating about an agreement, it was settled that Einar should go north to Throndhjem, and there take possession of all the lands and property which Bergliot had received in dower. Thereupon Einar took his way north; but the king remained behind in Viken, and remained long in Sarpsborg in autumn (1023), and during the first part of winter.

122.—RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND ERLING.

Erling Skjalgson held his dominion so, that all north from Sogn Lake, and east to the Naze, the bondes stood under him; and although he had much smaller royal fiefs than formerly, still so great a dread of him prevailed that nobody dared to do anything against his will, so that the king thought his power too great. There was a man called Aslak Fitiaskalle, who was powerful, and of high birth. Erling's father Skjalg, and Aslak's father Askel, were brother's sons. Aslak was a great friend of King Olaf, and the king settled him in South Hordaland, where he gave him a great fief, and great income, and ordered him in no respect to give way to Erling. But this came to nothing when the king was not in the neighbourhood; for then Erling would reign as he used to do, and was not more humble because Aslak would thrust himself forward as his equal. At last the strife went so far that Aslak could not keep his place, but hastened to King Olaf, and told him the circumstances between him and Erling. The king told Aslak to remain with him until he should

meet Erling; and sent a message to Erling that he should come to him in spring at Tunsberg. When they all arrived there they held a meeting at which the king said to him, "It is told me concerning thy government, Erling, that no man from Sogn Lake to the Naze can enjoy his freedom for thee; although there are many men there who consider themselves born to udal rights, and have their privileges like others born as they are. Now, here is your relation Aslak, who appears to have suffered great inconvenience from your conduct; and I do not know whether he himself is in fault, or whether he suffers because I have placed him to defend what is mine; and although I name him, there are many others who have brought the same complaint before us, both among those who are placed in office in our districts, and among the bailiffs who have our farms to manage, and are obliged to entertain me and my people."

Erling replies to this, "I will answer at once. I deny altogether that I have ever injured Aslak, or any one else, for being in your service; but this I will not deny, that it is now, as it has long been, that each of us relations will willingly be greater than the other: and, moreover, I freely acknowledge that I am ready to bow my neck to thee, King Olaf; but it is more difficult for me to stoop before one who is of slave descent in all his generation, although he is now your bailiff, or before others who are but equal to him in descent, although you bestow honours on them."

Now the friends of both interfered, and entreated that they would be reconciled; saying, that the king never

could have such powerful aid as from Erling, "if he was your friend entirely." On the other hand, they represent to Erling that he should give up to the king; for if he was in friendship with the king, it would be easy to do with all the others what he pleased. The meeting accordingly ended so that Erling should retain the fiefs he formerly had, and every complaint the king had against Erling should be dropped; but Skjalg, Erling's son, should come to the king, and remain in his power. Then Aslak returned to his dominions, and the two were in some sort reconciled. Erling returned home also to his domains, and followed his own way of ruling them.

123.—HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF ASBJORN SELSBANE.

There was a man named Sigurd Thoreson, a brother of Thorer Hund of Bjarkey Island. Sigurd was married to Sigrid Skjalg's daughter, a sister of Erling. Their son, called Asbjorn, became as he grew up a very able man. Sigurd dwelt at Omd in Thrandarnes, and was a very rich and respected man. He had not gone into the king's service; and Thorer in so far had attained higher dignity than his brother, that he was the king's lenderman. But at home, on his farm, Sigurd stood in no respect behind his brother in splendour and magnificence. As long as heathenism prevailed, Sigurd usually had three sacrifices every year: one on winter-night's eve, one on mid-winter's eve, and the third in summer. Although he had adopted Christianity, he continued the same custom with his feasts: he had, namely, a great friendly entertainment

at harvest time; a Yule feast in winter, to which he invited many; the third feast he had about Easter, to which also he invited many guests. He continued this fashion as long as he lived. Sigurd died on a bed of sickness when Asbjorn was eighteen years old. He was the only heir of his father, and he followed his father's custom of holding three festivals every year. Soon after Asbjorn came to his heritage the course of seasons began to grow worse, and the corn harvests of the people to fail; but Asbjorn held his usual feasts, and helped himself by having old corn, and an old provision laid up of all that was useful. But when one year had passed and another came, and the crops were no better than the year before, Sigrid wished that some if not all of the feasts should be given up. That Asbjorn would not consent to, but went round in harvest among his friends, buying corn where he could get it, and some he received in presents. He thus kept his feasts this winter also; but the spring after people got but little seed into the ground, for they had to buy the seed-corn. Then Sigrid spoke of diminishing the number of their house-servants. That Asbjorn would not consent to, but held by the old fashion of the house in all things. In summer (1022) it appeared again that there would be a bad year for corn; and to this came the report from the south that King Olaf prohibited all export of corn, malt, or meal, from the southern to the northern parts of the country. Then Asbjorn perceived that it would be difficult to procure what was necessary for a house-keeping, and resolved to put into the water a vessel for carrying goods which he had, and which was large

enough to go to sea with. The ship was good, all that belonged to her was of the best, and in the sails were stripes of cloth of various colours. Asbjorn made himself ready for a voyage, and put to sea with twenty men. They sailed from the north in summer; and nothing is told of their voyage until one day, about the time the days begin to shorten, they came to Karmtsund, and landed at Augvaldsnes. Up in the island Karmt there is a large farm not far from the sea, and a large house upon it called Augvaldsnes, which was a king's house, with an excellent farm, which Thorer Sel, who was the king's bailiff, had under his management. Thorer was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man; and he was polite in speech, showy in clothes, and fond of distinction, and not apt to give way to others, in which he was supported by the favour of the king. He was besides quick in speech, straightforward, and free in conversation. Asbjorn, with his company, brought up there for the night; and in the morning, when it was light, Thorer went down to the vessel with some men, and inquired who commanded the splendid ship. Asbjorn named his own and his father's name. Thorer asks where the voyage was intended for, and what was the errand.

Asbjorn replies, that he wanted to buy corn and malt; saying, as was true, that it was a very dear time north in the country. "But we are told that here the seasons are good; and wilt thou, farmer, sell us corn? I see that here are great corn stacks, and it would be very convenient if we had not to travel farther."

Thorer replies, "I will give thee the information that thou needst not go farther to buy corn, or travel about here in Rogaland; for I can tell thee that thou must turn about, and not travel farther, for the king forbids carrying corn out of this to the north of the country. Sail back again, Halogalander, for that will be thy safest course."

Asbjorn replies, "If it be so, bonde, as thou sayest, that we can get no corn here to buy, I will, notwithstanding, go forward upon my errand, and visit my family in Sole, and see my relation Erling's habitation."

Thorer: "How near is thy relationship to Erling?"

Asbjorn: "My mother is his sister."

Thorer: "It may be that I have spoken heedlessly, if so be that thou art sister's son of Erling."

Thereupon Asbjorn and his crew struck their tents, and turned the ship to sea. Thorer called after them, "A good voyage, and come here again on your way back." Asbjorn promised to do so, sailed away, and came in the evening to Jadar. Asbjorn went on shore with ten men; the other ten men watched the ship. When Asbjorn came to the house he was very well received, and Erling was very glad to see him, placed him beside himself, and asked him all the news in the north of the country. Asbjorn concealed nothing of his business from him; and Erling said it happened unfortunately that the king had just forbid the sale of corn. "And I know no man here," says he, "who has courage to break the king's order, and I find it difficult to keep well with the king, so many are trying to break our friendship."

Asbjorn replies, "It is late before we learn the truth. In my childhood I was taught that my mother was free-born throughout her whole descent, and that Erling of Sole was her boldest relation; and now I hear thee say that thou hast not the freedom, for the king's slaves here in Jadar, to do with thy own corn what thou pleasest."

Erling looked at him, smiled through his teeth, and said, "Ye Halogalanders know less of the king's power than we do here; but a bold man thou mayst be at home in thy conversation. Let us now drink, my friend, and we shall see to-morrow what can be done in thy business."

They did so, and were very merry all the evening. The following day Erling and Asbjorn talked over the matter again; and Erling said, "I have found out a way for you to purchase corn, Asbjorn. It is the same thing to you whoever is the seller." He answered that he did not care of whom he bought the corn, if he got a good right to his purchase. Erling said, "It appears to me probable that my slaves have quite as much corn as you require to buy; and they are not subject to law, or land regulation, like other men." Asbjorn agreed to the proposal. The slaves were now spoken to about the purchase, and they brought forward corn and malt, which they sold to Asbjorn, so that he loaded his vessel with what he wanted. When he was ready for sea Erling followed him on the road, made him presents of friendship, and they took a kind farewell of each other. Asbjorn got a good breeze, landed in the evening at Karmtsund, near to Augvaldsnes, and remained there for the night. Thorer Sel had heard of Asbjorn's voyage, and also that his vessel was deeply

laden. Thorer summoned people to him in the night, so that before daylight he had sixty men; and with these he went against Asbjorn as soon as it was light, and went out to the ship just as Asbjorn and his men were putting on their clothes. Asbjorn saluted Thorer, and Thorer asked what kind of goods Asbjorn had in the vessel.

He replied, "Corn and malt."

Thorer said, "Then Erling is doing as he usually does, and despising the king's orders, and is unwearied in opposing him in all things, insomuch that it is wonderful the king suffers it."

Thorer went on scolding in this way, and when he was silent Asbjorn said that Erling's slaves had owned the corn.

Thorer replied hastily, that he did not regard Erling's tricks. "And now, Asbjorn, there is no help for it; ye must either go on shore, or we will throw you overboard; for we will not be troubled with you while we are discharging the cargo."

Asbjorn saw that he had not men enough to resist Thorer; therefore he and his people landed, and Thorer took the whole cargo out of the vessel. When the vessel was discharged Thorer went through the ship, and observed, "Ye Halogalanders have good sails: take the old sail of our vessel and give it them; it is good enough for those who are sailing in a light vessel." Thus the sails were exchanged. When this was done Asbjorn and his comrades sailed away north along the coast, and did not stop until they reached home early in winter. This expedition was talked of far and wide, and Asbjorn had

no trouble that winter in making feasts at home. Thorer Hund invited Asbjorn and his mother, and also all whom they pleased to take along with him, to a Yule feast; but Asbjorn sat at home, and would not travel, and it was to be seen that Thorer thought Asbjorn despised his invitation, since he would not come. Thorer scoffed much at Asbjorn's voyage. "Now," said he, "it is evident that Asbjorn makes a great difference in his respect towards his relations; for in summer he took the greatest trouble to visit his relation Erling in Jadar, and now will not take the trouble to come to me in the next house. I don't know if he thinks there may be a Thorer Sel in his way upon every holm." Such words, and the like sarcasms, Asbjorn heard of; and very ill satisfied he was with his voyage, which had thus made him a laughing-stock to the country, and he remained at home all winter, and went to no feasts.

124.—MURDER OF THORER SEL.

Asbjorn had a long-ship standing in the noust (ship-shed), and it was a snekke (cutter) of twenty benches; and after Candlemas (February 2, 1023), he had the vessel put in the water, brought out all his furniture, and rigged her out. He then summoned to him his friends and people, so that he had nearly ninety men all well armed. When he was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed south along the coast; but as the wind did not suit, they advanced but slowly. When they came farther south they steered outside the rocks, without the usual ships'

channel, keeping to sea as much as it was possible to do so. Nothing is related of his voyage before the fifth day of Easter (April 18, 1023), when, about evening, they came on the outside of Karmt Island. This island is so shaped that it is very long, but not broad at its widest part; and without it lies the usual ships' channel. It is thickly inhabited; but where the island is exposed to the ocean great tracts of it are uncultivated. Asbjorn and his men landed at a place in the island that was uninhabited. After they had set up their ship-tents Asbjorn said, "Now ye must remain here and wait for me. I will go on land in the isle, and spy what news there may be which we know nothing of." Asbjorn had on mean clothes, a broad-brimmed hat, a fork in his hand, but had girt on his sword under his clothes. He went up to the land, and in through the island; and when he came upon a hillock, from which he could see the house on Augvaldsnes, and on as far as Karmtsund, he saw people in all quarters flocking together by land and by sea, and all going up to the house of Augvaldsnes. This seemed to him extraordinary; and therefore he went up quietly to a house close by, in which servants were cooking meat. From their conversation he discovered immediately that the king Olaf had come there to a feast, and that he had just sat down to table. Asbjorn turned then to the feasting-room, and when he came into the ante-room one was going in and another coming out; but nobody took notice of him. The hall-door was open, and he saw that Thorer Sel stood before the table of the high-seat. It was getting late in the evening, and Asbjorn heard people ask Thorer

what had taken place between him and Asbjorn; and Thorer had a long story about it, in which he evidently departed from the truth. Among other things he heard a man say, "How did Asbjorn behave when you discharged his vessel?" Thorer replied, "When we were taking out the cargo he bore it tolerably, but not well; and when we took the sail from him he wept." When Asbjorn heard this he suddenly drew his sword, rushed into the hall, and cut at Thorer. The stroke took him in the neck, so that the head fell upon the table before the king, and the body at his feet, and the table-cloth was soiled with blood from top to bottom. The king ordered him to be seized and taken out. This was done. They laid hands on Asbjorn, and took him from the hall. The table-furniture and table-cloths were removed, and also Thorer's corpse, and all the blood wiped up. The king was enraged to the highest; but remained quiet in speech, as he always was when in anger.

125.—OF SKJALG, THE SON OF ERLING SKJALGSON.

Skjalg Erlingson stood up, went before the king, and said, "Now may it go, as it often does, that every case will admit of alleviation. I will pay thee the mulct for the bloodshed on account of this man, so that he may retain life and limbs. All the rest determine and do, king, according to thy pleasure."

The king replies, "Is it not a matter of death, Skjalg, that a man break the Easter peace; and in the next place that he kills a man in the king's lodging; and in the third

that he makes my feet his execution-block, although that may appear a small matter to thee and thy father?"

Skjalg replies, "It is ill done, king, in as far as it displeases thee; but the deed is, otherwise, done excellently well. But if the deed appear to thee so important, and be so contrary to thy will, yet may I expect something for my services from thee; and certainly there are many who will say that thou didst well."

The king replies, "Although thou hast made me greatly indebted to thee, Skjalg, for thy services, yet I will not for thy sake break the law, or cast away my own dignity."

Then Skjalg turned round, and went out of the hall. Twelve men who had come with Skjalg all followed him, and many others went out with him. Skjalg said to Thorarin Nefiulfson, "If thou wilt have me for a friend, take care that this man be not killed before Sunday." Thereupon Skjalg and his men set off, took a rowing boat which he had, and rowed south as fast as they could, and came to Jadar with the first glimpse of morning. They went up instantly to the house, and to the loft in which Erling slept. Skjalg rushed so hard against the door that it burst asunder at the nails. Erling and the others who were within started up. He was in one spring upon his legs, grasped his shield and sword, and rushed to the door, demanding who was there. Skjalg names himself, and begs him to open the door. Erling replies, "It was most likely to be thee who hast behaved so foolishly; or is there any one who is pursuing thee?" Thereupon the door was unlocked. Then said Skjalg, "Although it appears to thee that I am so hasty, I suppose our relation

Asbjorn will not think my proceedings too quick; for he sits in chains there in the north at Augvaldsnes, and it would be but manly to hasten back and stand by him." The father and son then had a conversation together, and Skjalg related the whole circumstances of Thorer Sel's murder.

126.—OF THORARIN NEFIULFSON.

King Olaf took his seat again when everything in the hall was put in order, and was enraged beyond measure. He asked how it was with the murderer. He was answered, that he was sitting out upon the doorstep under guard.

The king says, "Why is he not put to death?"

Thorarin Nefiulfson replies, "Sire, would you not call it murder to kill a man in the night-time?"

The king answers, "Put him in irons then, and kill him in the morning."

Then Asbjorn was laid in chains, and locked up in a house for the night. The day after the king heard the morning mass, and then went to the Thing, where he sat till high mass. As he was going to mass he said to Thorarin, "Is not the sun high enough now in the heavens that your friend Asbjorn may be hanged?"

Thorarin bowed before the king, and said, "Sire, it was said by Bishop Sigurd on Friday last, that the King who has all things in his power had to endure great temptation of spirit; and blessed is he who rather imitates him, than those who condemned the man to death,

or those who caused his slaughter. It is not long till to-morrow, and that is a working day."

The king looked at him, and said, "Thou must take care then that he is not put to death to-day; but take him under thy charge, and know for certain that thy own life shall answer for it if he escape in any way."

Then the king went away. Thorarin went also to where Asbjorn lay in irons, took off his chains, and brought him to a small room, where he had meat and drink set before him, and told him what the king had determined in case Asbjorn ran away. Asbjorn replies, that Thorarin need not be afraid of him. Thorarin sat a long while with him during the day, and slept there all night. On Saturday the king arose and went to the early mass, and from thence he went to the Thing, where a great many bondes were assembled, who had many complaints to be determined. The king sat there long in the day, and it was late before the people went to high mass. Thereafter the king went to table. When he had got meat he sat drinking for a while, so that the tables were not removed. Thorarin went out to the priest who had the church under his care, and gave him two marks of silver to ring in the Sabbath as soon as the king's table was taken away. When the king had drunk as much as he wished the tables were removed. Then said the king, that it was now time for the slaves to go to the murderer and put him to death. In the same moment the bell rang in the Sabbath.

Then Thorarin went before the king, and said, "The Sabbath-peace this man must have, although he has done evil."

The king said, "Do thou take care, Thorarin, that he do not escape."

The king then went to the church, and attended the vesper service, and Thorarin sat the whole day with Asbjorn. On Sunday the bishop visited Asbjorn, confessed him, and gave him orders to hear high mass. Thorarin then went to the king, and asked him to appoint men to guard the murderer. "I will now," he said, "be free of this charge." The king thanked him for his care, and ordered men to watch over Asbjorn who was again laid in chains. When the people went to high mass Asbjorn was led to the church, and he stood outside of the church with his guard; but the king and all the people stood in the church at mass.

127.—ERLING'S RECONCILIATION WITH KING OLAF.

Now we must again take up our story where we left it, —that Erling and his son Skjalg held a council on this affair, and according to the resolution of Erling, and of Skjalg and his other sons, it was determined to assemble a force and send out message-tokens. A great multitude of people accordingly came together. They got ready with all speed, rigged their ships, and when they reckoned upon their force they found they had nearly 1500 men. With this war-force they set off, and came on Sunday to Augvaldsnes on Karmt Island. They went straight up to the house with all the men, and arrived just as the Scripture lesson was read. They went directly to the church, took Asbjorn, and broke off his chains. At the tumult and clash of arms all who were outside of the

church ran into it; but they who were in the church looked all towards them, except the king, who stood still, without looking around him. Erling and his sons drew up their men on each side of the path which led from the church to the hall, and Erling with his sons stood next to the hall. When high mass was finished the king went immediately out of the church, and first went through the open space between the ranks drawn up, and then his retinue, man by man; and as he came to the door Erling placed himself before the door, bowed to the king, and saluted him. The king saluted him in return, and prayed God to help him. Erling took up the word first, and said, "My relation, Asbjorn, it is reported to me, has been guilty of misdemeanor, king; and it is a great one, if he has done anything that incurs your displeasure. Now I am come to entreat for him peace, and such penalties as you yourself may determine; but that thereby he redeem life and limb, and his remaining here in his native land."

The king replies, "It appears to me, Erling, that thou thinkest the case of Asbjorn is now in thy own power, and I do not therefore know why thou speakest now as if thou wouldst offer terms for him. I think thou hast drawn together these forces because thou are determined to settle what is between us."

Erling replies, "Thou only, king, shalt determine, and determine so that we shall be reconciled."

The king: "Thinkest thou, Erling, to make me afraid? and art thou come here in such force with that expectation? No, that shall not be; and if that be thy thought, I must in no way turn and fly."

Erling replies, "Thou hast no occasion to remind me how often I have come to meet thee with fewer men than thou hadst. But now I shall not conceal what lies in my mind, namely, that it is my will that we now enter into a reconciliation; for otherwise I expect we shall never meet again." Erling was then as red as blood in the face.

Now Bishop Sigurd came forward to the king and said, "Sire, I entreat you on God Almighty's account to be reconciled with Erling according to his offer,—that the man shall retain life and limb, but that thou shalt determine according to thy pleasure all the other conditions."

The king replies, "You will determine."

Then said the bishop, "Erling, do thou give security for Asbjorn, such as the king thinks sufficient, and then leave the conditions to the mercy of the king, and leave all in his power."

Erling gave a surety to the king on his part, which he accepted.

Thereupon Asbjorn received his life and safety, and delivered himself into the king's power, and kissed his hand.

Erling then withdrew with his forces, without exchanging salutation with the king; and the king went into the hall, followed by Asbjorn. The king thereafter made known the terms of reconciliation to be these:—"In the first place, Asbjorn, thou must submit to the law of the land, which commands that the man who kills a servant of the king must undertake his service, if the king will. Now I will that thou shalt undertake the office of bailiff which Thorer Sel had, and manage my estate here in Aug-

valdsnes." Asbjorn replies, that it should be according to the king's will; "but I must first go home to my farm, and put things in order there." The king was satisfied with this, and proceeded to another guest-quarter. Asbjorn made himself ready with his comrades, who all kept themselves concealed in a quiet creek during the time Asbjorn was away from them. They had had their spies out to learn how it went with him, and would not depart without having some certain news of him.

128.—OF THORER HUND AND ASBJORN SELSBANE.

Asbjorn then set out on his voyage, and about spring (1023) got home to his farm. After this exploit he was always called Asbjorn Selsbane. Asbjorn had not been long at home before he and his relation Thorer met and conversed together, and Thorer asked Asbjorn particularly all about his journey, and about all the circumstances which had happened on the course of it. Asbjorn told everything as it had taken place.

Then said Thorer, "Thou thinkest that thou hast well rubbed out the disgrace of having been plundered in last harvest."

"I think so," replies Asbjorn; "and what is thy opinion, cousin?"

"That I will soon tell thee," said Thorer. "Thy first expedition to the south of the country was indeed very disgraceful, and that disgrace has been redeemed; but this expedition is both a disgrace to thee and to thy family, if it end in thy becoming the king's slave, and being put on

a footing with that worst of men, Thorer Sel. Show that thou art manly enough to sit here on thy own property, and we thy relations shall so support thee that thou wilt never more come into such trouble."

Asbjorn found this advice much to his mind; and before they parted it was firmly determined that Asbjorn should remain on his farm, and not go back to the king or enter into his service. And he did so, and sat quietly at home on his farm.

129.—KING OLAF BAPTIZES IN VORS AND VALDERS.

After King Olaf and Erling Skjalgson had this meeting at Augvaldsnes, new differences arose between them, and increased so much that they ended in perfect enmity. In spring (1023) the king proceeded to guest-quarters in Hordaland, and went up also to Vors, because he heard there was but little of the true faith among the people there. He held a Thing with the bondes at a place called Vang, and a number of bondes came to it fully armed. The king ordered them to adopt Christianity; but they challenged him to battle, and it proceeded so far that the men were drawn up on both sides. But when it came to the point such a fear entered into the blood of the bondes that none would advance or command, and they chose the part which was most to their advantage; namely, to obey the king and receive Christianity; and before the king left them they were all baptized. One day it happened that the king was riding on his way a singing of psalms, and when he came right opposite some hills he

halted and said, "Man after man shall relate these my words, that I think it not advisable for any king of Norway to travel hereafter between these hills." And it is a saying among the people that the most kings since that time have avoided it. The king proceeded to Ostrarfjord, and came to his ships, with which he went north to Sogn, and had his living in guest-quarters there in summer (1023); when autumn approached he turned in towards the Fjord district, and went from thence to Valders, where the people were still heathen. The king hastened up to the lake in Valders, came unexpectedly on the bondes, seized their vessels, and went on board of them with all his men. He then sent out message-tokens, and appointed a Thing so near the lake that he could use the vessels if he found he required them. The bondes resorted to the Thing in a great and well-armed host; and when he commanded them to accept Christianity the bondes shouted against him, told him to be silent, and made a great uproar and clashing of weapons. But when the king saw that they would not listen to what he would teach them, and also that they had too great a force to contend with, he turned his discourse, and asked if there were people at the Thing who had disputes with each other which they wished him to settle. It was soon found by the conversation of the bondes that they had many quarrels among themselves, although they had all joined in speaking against Christianity. When the bondes began to set forth their own cases, each endeavored to get some upon his side to support him; and this lasted the whole day long until evening, when the Thing was concluded.

When the bondes had heard that the king had travelled to Valders, and was come into their neighborhood, they had sent out message-tokens summoning the free and the unfree to meet in arms, and with this force they had advanced against the king; so that the neighbourhood all around was left without people. When the Thing was concluded the bondes still remained assembled; and when the king observed this he went on board his ships, rowed in the night right across the water, landed in the country there, and began to plunder and burn. The day after the king's men rowed from one point of land to another, and over all the king ordered the habitations to be set on fire. Now when the bondes who were assembled saw what the king was doing, namely, plundering and burning, and saw the smoke and flame of their houses, they dispersed, and each hastened to his own home to see if he could find those he had left. As soon as there came a dispersion among the crowd, the one slipped away after the other, until the whole multitude was dissolved. Then the king rowed across the lake again, burning also on that side of the country. Now came the bondes to him begging for mercy, and offering to submit to him. He gave every man who came to him peace if he desired it, and restored to him his goods; and nobody refused to adopt Christianity. The king then had the people christened, and took hostages from the bondes. He ordered churches to be built and consecrated, and placed teachers in them. He remained a long time here in autumn, and had his ships drawn across the neck of land between the two lakes. The king did not go far from the sides of the lakes into

the country, for he did not much trust the bondes. When the king thought that frost might be expected, he went further up the country, and came to Thoten. Arnor, the earl's skald, tells how King Olaf burnt in the Uplands, in the poem he composed concerning the king's brother King Harald:—

"Against the Upland people wroth,
Olaf, to most so mild, went forth:
The houses burning,
All people mourning;
Who could not fly
Hung on gallows high.
It was, I think, in Olaf's race
The Upland people to oppress."

Afterwards King Olaf went north through the valleys to Dovrefield, and did not halt until he reached the Throndhjem district and arrived at Nidaros, where he had ordered winter provision to be collected, and remained all winter (1024). This was the tenth year of his reign.

130.—OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

The summer before Einar Tambaskelfer left the country, and went westward to England (1023). There he met his relative Earl Hakon, and stayed some time with him. He then visited King Canute, from whom he received great presents. Einar then went south all the way to Rome, and came back the following summer (1024), and returned to his house and land. King Olaf and Einar did not meet this time.

131.—THE BIRTH OF KING MAGNUS.

There was a girl whose name was Alfhild, and who was usually called the king's slave-woman, although she was of good descent. She was a remarkably handsome

girl, and lived in King Olaf's court. It was reported this spring that Alfhild was with child, and the king's confidential friends knew that he was father of the child. It happened one night that Alfhild was taken ill, and only few people were at hand; namely, some women, priests, Sigvat the skald, and a few others. Alfhild was so ill that she was nearly dead; and when she was delivered of a man-child, it was some time before they could discover whether the child was in life. But when the infant drew breath, although very weak, the priest told Sigvat to hasten to the king, and tell him of the event.

He replies, "I dare not on any account waken the king; for he has forbid that any man should break his sleep until he awakens of himself."

The priest replies, "It is of necessity that this child be immediately baptized, for it appears to me there is but little life in it."

Sigvat said, "I would rather venture to take upon me to let thee baptize the child, than to awaken the king; and I will take it upon myself if anything be amiss, and will give the child a name."

They did so; and the child was baptized, and got the name of Magnus. The next morning, when the king awoke and had dressed himself, the circumstance was told him. He ordered Sigvat to be called, and said, "How camest thou to be so bold as to have my child baptized before I knew anything about it?"

Sigvat replies, "Because I would rather give two men to God than one to the devil."

The king—"What meanest thou?"

Sigvat—"The child was near death, and must have been the devil's if it had died as a heathen, and now it is God's. And I knew besides that if thou shouldst be so angry on this account that it affected my life, I would be God's also."

The king asked, "But why didst thou call him Magnus, which is not a name of our race?"

Sigvat—"I called him after King Carl Magnus, who, I knew, had been the best man in the world."

Then said the king, "Thou art a very lucky man, Sigvat; but it is not wonderful that luck should accompany understanding. It is only wonderful how it sometimes happens that luck attends ignorant men, and that foolish counsel turns out lucky." The king was overjoyed at the circumstance. The boy grew up, and gave good promise as he advanced in age.

132.—THE MURDER OF ASBJORN SELSBANE.

The same spring (1024) the king gave into the hands of Asmund Grankelson the half of the sheriffdom of the district of Halogaland, which Harek of Thjotta had formerly held, partly in fief, partly for defraying the king's entertainment in guest-quarters. Asmund had a ship manned with nearly thirty well-armed men. When Asmund came north he met Harek, and told him what the king had determined with regard to the district, and produced to him the tokens of the king's full powers. Harek said, "The king had the right to give the sheriffdom to whom he pleased; but the former sovereigns had

not been in use to diminish our rights who are entitled by birth to hold powers from the king, and to give them into the hands of the peasants who never before held such offices." But although it was evident that it was against Harek's inclination, he allowed Asmund to take the sheriffdom according to the king's order. Then Asmund proceeded home to his father, stayed there a short time, and then went north to Halogaland to his sheriffdom; and he came north to Langey Island, where there dwelt two brothers called Gunstein and Karle, both very rich and respectable men. Gunstein, the eldest of the brothers, was a good husbandman. Karle was a handsome man in appearance, and splendid in his dress; and both were, in many respects, expert in all feats. Asmund was well received by them, remained with them a while, and collected such revenues of his sheriffdom as he could get. Karle spoke with Asmund of his wish to go south with him and take service in the court of King Olaf, to which Asmund encouraged him much, promising his influence with the king for obtaining for Karle such a situation as he desired; and Karle accordingly accompanied Asmund. Asmund heard that Asbjorn, who had killed Thorer Sel, had gone to the market-meeting of Vagar with a large ship of burden manned with nearly twenty men, and that he was now expected from the south. Asmund and his retinue proceeded on their way southwards along the coast with a contrary wind, but there was little of it. They saw some of the fleet for Vagar sailing towards them; and they privately inquired of them about Asbjorn, and were told he was upon the way coming from the

south. Asmund and Karle were bedfellows, and excellent friends. One day, as Asmund and his people were rowing through a sound, a ship of burden came sailing towards them. The ship was easily known, having high bulwarks, was painted with white and red colours, and coloured cloth was woven in the sail. Karle said to Asmund, "Thou hast often said thou wast curious to see Asbjorn who killed Thorer Sel; and if I know one ship from another, that is his which is coming sailing along."

Asmund replies, "Be so good, comrade, and tell me which is he when thou seest him."

When the ships came alongside of each other, "That is Asbjorn," said Karle; "the man sitting at the helm in a blue cloak."

Asmund replies, "I shall make his blue cloak red;" threw a spear at Asbjorn, and hit him in the middle of the body, so that it flew through and through him, and stuck fast in the upper part of the stern-post; and Asbjorn fell down dead from the helm. Then each vessel sailed on its course, and Asbjorn's body was carried north to Thrandarnes. Then Sigrid sent a message to Bjarkey Isle to Thorer Hund, who came to her while they were, in the usual way, dressing the corpse of Asbjorn. When he returned Sigrid gave presents to all her friends, and followed Thorer to his ship; but before they parted she said, "It has so fallen out, Thorer, that my son has suffered by thy friendly counsel, but he did not retain life to reward thee for it; but although I have not his ability, yet will I show my good will. Here is a gift I give thee, which I expect thou wilt use. Here is the spear which went

through Asbjorn my son, and there is still blood upon it, to remind thee that it fits the wound thou hast seen on the corpse of thy brother's son Asbjorn. It would be a manly deed, if thou shouldst throw this spear from thy hand so that it stood in Olaf's breast; and this I can tell thee, that thou wilt be named coward in every man's mouth, if thou dost not avenge Asbjorn." Thereupon she turned about, and went her way.

Thorer was so enraged at her words that he could not speak. He neither thought of casting the spear from him, nor took notice of the gangway; so that he would have fallen into the sea, if his men had not laid hold of him as he was going on board his ship. It was a feathered spear; not large, but the handle was gold-mounted. Now Thorer rowed away with his people, and went home to Bjarkey Isle. Asmund and his companions also proceeded on their way until they came south to Throndhjem, where they waited on King Olaf; and Asmund related to the king all that had happened on the voyage. Karle became one of the king's court-men, and the friendship continued between him and Asmund. They did not keep secret the words that had passed between Asmund and Karle before Asbjorn was killed; for they even told them to the king. But then it happened, according to the proverb, that every one has a friend in the midst of his enemies. There were some present who took notice of the words, and they reached Thorer Hund's ears.

133.—OF KING OLAF.

When spring (1024) was advanced King Olaf rigged

out his ships, and sailed southwards in summer along the land. He held Things with the bondes on the way, settled the law business of the people, put to rights the faith of the country, and collected the king's taxes wherever he came. In autumn he proceeded south to the frontier of the country; and King Olaf had now made the people Christians in all the great districts, and everywhere, by laws, had introduced order into the country. He had also, as before related, brought the Orkney Islands under his power, and by messages had made many friends in Iceland, Greenland, and the Farey Islands. King Olaf had sent timber for building a church to Iceland, of which a church was built upon the Thing-field where the General Thing is held, and had sent a bell for it, which is still there. This was after the Iceland people had altered their laws, and introduced Christianity, according to the word King Olaf had sent them. After that time, many considerable persons came from Iceland, and entered into King Olaf's service; as Thorkel Eyjolfson, and Thorleif Bollason, Thord Kolbeinson, Thord Barkarson, Thorgeir Havarson, Thormod Kalbrunar-skald. King Olaf had sent many friendly presents to chief people in Iceland; and they in return sent him such things as they had which they thought most acceptable. Under this show of friendship which the king gave Iceland were concealed many things which afterwards appeared.

134.—KING OLAF'S MESSAGE TO ICELAND, AND THE COUNSELS OF THE ICELANDERS.

King Olaf this summer (1024) sent Thorarin Nefiulf-

son to Iceland on his errands; and Thorarin went out of Throndhjem fjord along with the king, and followed him south to More. From thence Thorarin went out to sea, and got such a favourable breeze that after four days' sail he landed at the Westman Isles, in Iceland. He proceeded immediately to the Althing, and came just as the people were upon the Lawhillock, to which he repaired. When the cases of the people before the Thing had been determined according to law, Thorarin Nefiulfson took up the word as follows:—"We parted four days ago from King Olaf Haraldson, who sends God Almighty's and his own salutation to all the chiefs and principal men of the land; as also to all the people in general, men and women, young and old, rich and poor. He also lets you know that he will be your sovereign if ye will become his subjects, so that he and you will be friends, assisting each other in all that is good."

The people replied in a friendly way, that they would gladly be the king's friends, if he would be a friend of the people of their country.

Then Thorarin again took up the word:—"This follows in addition to the king's message, that he will in friendship desire of the people of the north district that they give him the island, or out-rock, which lies at the mouth of Eyfjord, and is called Grimsey, for which he will give you from his country whatever good the people of the district may desire. He sends this message particularly to Gudmund of Modruvellir to support this matter, because he understands that Gudmund has most influence in that quarter."

Gudmund replies, "My inclination is greatly for King Olaf's friendship, and that I consider much more useful than the out-rock he desires. But the king has not heard rightly if he think I have more power in this matter than any other, for the island is a common. We, however, who have the most use of the isle, will hold a meeting among ourselves about it."

Then the people went to their tent-houses; and the Northland people had a meeting among themselves, and talked over the business, and every one spoke according to his judgment. Gudmund supported the matter, and many others formed their opinions by his. Then some asked why his brother Einar did not speak on the subject. "We think he has the clearest insight into most things."

Einar answers, "I have said so little about the matter because nobody has asked me about it; but if I may give my opinion, our countrymen might just as well make themselves at once liable to land-scat to King Olaf, and submit to all his exactions as he has them among his people in Norway; and this heavy burden we will lay not only upon ourselves, but on our sons, and their sons, and all our race, and on all the community dwelling and living in this land, which never after will be free from this slavery. Now although this king is a good man, as I well believe him to be, yet it must be hereafter, when kings succeed each other, that some will be good, and some bad. Therefore if the people of this country will preserve the freedom they have enjoyed since the land was first inhabited, it is not advisable to give the king the smallest spot to fasten himself upon the country by, and not to

give him any kind of scat or service that can have the appearance of a duty. On the other hand, I think it very proper that the people send the king such friendly presents of hawks or horses, tents or sails, or such things which are suitable gifts; and these are well applied if they are repaid with friendship. But as to Grimsey Isle, I have to say, that although nothing is drawn from it that can serve for food, yet it could support a great war-force cruising from thence in long-ships; and then, I doubt not, there would be distress enough at every poor peasant's door."

When Einar had thus explained the proper connection of the matter, the whole community were of one mind that such a thing should not be permitted; and Thorarin saw sufficiently well what the result of his errand was to be.

135.—THE ANSWER OF THE ICELANDERS.

The day following, Thorarin went again to the Lawhill, and brought forward his errand in the following words: —"King Olaf sends his message to his friends here in the country, among whom he reckons Gudmund Eyjolfson, Snorre Gode, Thorkel Eyjolfson, Skapte the lagman, and Thorstein Halson, and desires them by me to come to him on a friendly visit; and adds, that ye must not excuse yourselves, if you regard his friendship as worth anything." In their answer they thanked the king for his message and added, that they would afterwards give a reply to it by Thorarin when they had more closely considered the matter with their friends. The chiefs now

weighed the matter among themselves, and each gave his own opinion about the journey. Snorre and Skapte dissuaded from such a dangerous proceeding with the people of Norway; namely, that all the men who had the most to say in the country should at once leave Iceland. They added, that from this message, and from what Einar had said, they had the suspicion that the king intended to use force and strong measures against the Icelanders if he ruled in the country. Gudmund and Thorkel Eyjolfson insisted much that they should follow King Olaf's invitation, and called it a journey of honour. But when they had considered the matter on all sides, it was at last resolved that they should not travel themselves, but that each of them should send in his place a man whom they thought best suited for it. After this determination the Thing was closed, and there was no journey that summer. Thorarin made two voyages that summer, and about harvest was back again at King Olaf's, and reported the result of his mission, and that some of the chiefs, or their sons, would come from Iceland according to his message.

136.—OF THE PEOPLE OF THE FAREY ISLANDS.

The same summer (1024) there came from the Farey Islands to Norway, on the king's invitation, Gille the lagman, Leif Ossurson, Thoralf of Dimun, and many other bondes' sons. Thord of Gata made himself ready for the voyage; but just as he was setting out he got a stroke of palsy, and could not come, so he remained behind. Now

when the people from the Farey Isles arrived at King Olaf's, he called them to him to a conference, and explained the purpose of the journey he had made them take, namely, that he would have scat from the Farey Islands, and also that the people there should be subject to the laws which the king should give them. In that meeting it appeared from the king's words that he would make the Farey people who had come answerable, and would bind them by oath to conclude this union. He also offered to the men whom he thought the ablest to take them into his service, and bestow honour and friendship on them. These Farey men understood the king's words so, that they must dread the turn the matter might take if they did not submit to all that the king desired. Although they held several meetings about the business before it ended, the king's desire at last prevailed. Leif, Gille, and Thoralf went into the king's service, and became his courtmen; and they, with all their travelling companions, swore the oath to King Olaf, that the law and land privilege which he set them should be observed in the Farey Islands, and also the scat be levied that he laid upon them. Thereafter the Farey people prepared for their return home, and at their departure the king gave those who had entered into his service presents in testimony of his friendship, and they went their way. Now the king ordered a ship to be rigged, manned it, and sent men to the Farey Islands to receive the scat from the inhabitants which they should pay him. It was late before they were ready; but they set off at last: and of their journey all that is to be told is, that they did not come back, and no scat either, the fol-

lowing summer; for nobody had come to the Farey Isles, and no man had demanded scat there.

137.—OF THE MARRIAGE OF KETIL AND OF THORD TO THE KING'S SISTERS.

King Olaf proceeded about harvest time to Viken, and sent a message before him to the Uplands that they should prepare guest-quarters for him, as he intended to be there in winter. Afterwards he made ready for his journey, and went to the Uplands, and remained the winter there; going about in guest-quarters, and putting things to rights where he saw it needful, advancing also the cause of Christianity wheresoever it was requisite. It happened while King Olaf was in Hedemark that Ketil Kalf of Ringanes courted Gunhild, a daughter of Sigurd Syr and of King Olaf's mother Asta. Gunhild was a sister of King Olaf, and therefore it belonged to the king to give consent and determination to the business. He took it in a friendly way; for he know Ketil, that he was of high birth, wealthy, and of good understanding, and a great chief; and also he had long been a great friend of King Olaf, as before related. All these circumstances induced the king to approve of the match, and so it was that Ketil got Gunhild. King Olaf was present at the wedding. From thence the king went north to Gudbrandsdal, where he was entertained in guest-quarters. There dwelt a man, by name Thord Guthormson, on a farm called Steig; and he was the most powerful man in the north end of the valley. When Thord and the king met, Thord

made proposals for Isrid, the daughter of Gudbrand, and the sister of King Olaf's mother, as it belonged to the king to give consent. After the matter was considered, it was determined that the marriage should proceed, and Thord got Isrid. Afterwards Thord was the king's faithful friend, and also many of Thord's relations and friends, who followed his footsteps. From thence King Olaf returned south through Thoten and Hadaland, from thence to Ringerike, and so to Viken. In spring (1025) he went to Tunsberg, and stayed there while there was the market-meeting, and a great resort of people. He then had his vessels rigged out, and had many people about him.

138.—OF THE ICELANDERS.

The same summer (1025) came Stein, a son of the lagman Skapte, from Iceland, in compliance with King Olaf's message; and with him Thorod, a son of Snorre the gode, and Geller, a son of Thorkel Eyjolfson, and Egil, a son of Hal of Sida, brother of Thorstein Hal. Gudmund Eyjolfson had died the winter before. These Iceland men repaired to King Olaf as soon as they had opportunity; and when they met the king they were well received, and all were in his house. The same summer King Olaf heard that the ship was missing which he had sent the summer before to the Farey Islands after the scat, and nobody knew what had become of it. The king fitted out another ship, manned it, and sent it to the Farey Islands for the scat. They got under weigh, and pro-

ceeded to sea; but as little was ever heard of this vessel as of the former one, and many conjectures were made about what had become of them.

139.—HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF CANUTE THE GREAT.

During this time Canute the Great, called by some Canute the Old, was king of England and Denmark. Canute the Great was a son of Svein Haraldson Forked-beard, whose forefathers, for a long course of generations, had ruled over Denmark. Harald Gormson, Canute's grandfather, had conquered Norway after the fall of Harald Grafeld, Gunhild's son, had taken scat from it, and had placed Earl Hakon the Great to defend the country. The Danish King, Svein Haraldson, ruled also over Norway, and placed his son-in-law Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, to defend the country. The brothers Eirik and Svein, Earl Hakon's sons, ruled the land until Earl Eirik went west to England, on the invitation of his brother-in-law Canute the Great, when he left behind his son Earl Hakon, sister's son of Canute the Great, to govern Norway. But when Olaf the Thick came first to Norway, as before related, he took prisoner Earl Hakon, the son of Eirik, and deposed him from the kingdom. Then Hakon proceeded to his mother's brother, Canute the Great, and had been with him constantly until the time to which here in our saga we have now come. Canute the Great had conquered England by blows and weapons, and had a long struggle before the people of the land were subdued. But when he had

set himself perfectly firm in the government of the country, he remembered that he also had right to a kingdom which he had not brought under his authority; and that was Norway. He thought he had hereditary right to all Norway; and his sister's son Hakon, who had held a part of it, appeared to him to have lost it with disgrace. The reason why Canute and Hakon had remained quiet with respect to their claims upon Norway was, that when King Olaf Haraldson landed in Norway the people and commonalty ran together in crowds, and would hear of nothing but that Olaf should be king over all the country, although some afterwards, who thought that the people upon account of his power had no self-government left to them, went out of the country. Many powerful men, or rich bondes' sons, had therefore gone to Canute the Great, and pretended various errands; and every one who came to Canute and desired his friendship was loaded with presents. With Canute, too, could be seen greater splendour and pomp than elsewhere, both with regard to the multitude of people who were daily in attendance, and also to the other magnificent things about the houses he owned and dwelt in himself. Canute the Great drew scat and revenue from the people who were the richest of all in northern lands; and in the same proportion as he had greater revenues than other kings, he also made greater presents than other kings. In his whole kingdom peace was so well established, that no man dared break it. The people of the country kept the peace towards each other, and had their old country law: and for this he was greatly celebrated in all countries. And many of those

who came from Norway represented their hardships to Earl Hakon, and some even to King Canute himself; and that the Norway people were ready to turn back to the government of King Canute, or Earl Hakon, and receive deliverance from them. This conversation suited well the earl's inclination, and he carried it to the king, and begged of him to try if King Olaf would not surrender the kingdom, or at least come to an agreement to divide it; and many supported the earl's views.

140.—CANUTE'S MESSAGE TO KING OLAF.

Canute the Great sent men from the West, from England, to Norway, and equipped them magnificently for the journey. They were bearers of the English king Canute's letter and seal. They came about spring (1025) to the king of Norway, Olaf Haraldson, in Tunsberg. Now when it was told the king that ambassadors had arrived from Canute the Great he was ill at ease, and said that Canute had not sent messengers hither with any messages that could be of advantage to him or his people; and it was some days before the ambassadors could come before the king. But when they got permission to speak to him they appeared before the king, and made known King Canute's letter, and their errand which accompanied it; namely, "that King Canute considers all Norway as his property, and insists that his forefathers before him have possessed that kingdom; but as King Canute offers peace to all countries, he will also offer peace to all here, if it can be so settled, and will not invade Norway with his army if it can be avoided. Now if King Olaf Harald-

son wishes to remain king of Norway, he will come to King Canute, and receive his kingdom as a fief from him, become his vassal, and pay the scat which the earls before him formerly paid." Thereupon they presented their letters, which contained precisely the same conditions.

Then King Olaf replies, "I have heard say, by old stories, that the Danish king Gorm was considered but a small king of a few people, for he ruled over Denmark alone; but the kings who succeeded him thought that was too little. It has since come so far that King Canute rules over Denmark and England, and has conquered for himself a great part of Scotland. Now he claims also my paternal heritage, and will then show some moderation in his covetousness. Does he wish to rule over all the countries of the North? Will he eat up all the kail in England? He shall do so, and reduce that country to a desert, before I lay my head in his hands, or show him any other kind of vassalage. Now ye shall tell him these my words,—I will defend Norway with battle-axe and sword as long as life is given me, and will pay scat to no man for my kingdom."

After this answer King Canute's ambassadors made themselves ready for their journey home, and were by no means rejoiced at the success of their errand.

Sigvat the skald had been with King Canute, who had given him a gold ring that weighed half a mark. The skald Berse Skaldtorfason was also there, and to him King Canute gave two gold rings, each weighing two marks, and besides a sword inlaid with gold. Sigvat made this song about it:—

"When we came o'er the wave, you cub, when we came o'er the wave,
To me one ring, to thee two rings, the mighty Canute gave:
One mark to me,
Four marks to thee,—
A sword too, fine and brave.
Now God knows well,
And skalds can tell,
What justice here would crave."

Sigvat the skald was very intimate with King Canute's messengers, and asked them many questions. They answered all his inquiries about their conversation with King Olaf, and the result of their message. They said the king listened unwillingly to their proposals. "And we do not know," say they, "to what he is trusting when he refuses becoming King Canute's vassal, and going to him, which would be the best thing he could do; for King Canute is so mild that however much a chief may have done against him, he is pardoned if he only show himself obedient. It is but lately that two kings came to him from the North, from Fife in Scotland, and he gave up his wrath against them, and allowed them to retain all the lands they had possessed before, and gave them besides very valuable gifts." Then Sigvat sang:—

"From the North land, the midst of Fife,
Two kings came begging peace and life;
Craving from Canute life and peace,—
May Olaf's good luck never cease!
May he, our gallant Norse king, never
Be brought, like these, his head to offer
As ransom to a living man
For the broad lands his sword has won."

King Canute's ambassadors proceeded on their way back, and had a favourable breeze across the sea. They came to King Canute, and told him the result of their errand, and King Olaf's last words. King Canute replies, "King Olaf guesses wrong, if he thinks I shall eat up all the kail in England; for I will let him see that there is something else than kail under my ribs, and cold kail it shall be for him." The same summer (1025) Aslak and

Skjalg, the sons of Erling of Jadar, came from Norway to King Canute, and were well received; for Aslak was married to Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Svein Hakonson, and she and Earl Hakon Eirikson were brothers' children. King Canute gave these brothers great fiefs over there, and they stood in great favour.

141.—KING OLAF'S ALLIANCE WITH ONUND THE KING OF SVITHJOD.

King Olaf summoned to him all the lendermen, and had a great many people about him this summer (1025), for a report was abroad that King Canute would come from England. People had heard from merchant vessels that Canute was assembling a great army in England. When summer was advanced, some affirmed and others denied that the army would come. King Olaf was all summer in Viken, and had spies out to learn if Canute was come to Denmark. In autumn (1025) he sent messengers eastward to Svithjod to his brother-in-law King Onund, and let him know King Canute's demand upon Norway; adding, that, in his opinion, if Canute subdued Norway, King Onund would not long enjoy the Swedish dominions in peace. He thought it advisable, therefore, that they should unite for their defence. "And then," said he, "we will have strength enough to hold out against Canute." King Onund received King Olaf's message favourably, and replied to it, that he for his part would make common cause with King Olaf, so that each of them should stand

by the one who first required help with all the strength of his kingdom. In these messages between them it was also determined that they should have a meeting, and consult with each other. The following winter (1026) King Onund intended to travel across West Gautland, and King Olaf made preparations for taking his winter abode at Sarpsborg.

142.—KING CANUTE'S AMBASSADORS TO ONUND OF SVITHJOD.

In autumn King Canute the Great came to Denmark, and remained there all winter (1026) with a numerous army. It was told him that ambassadors with messages had been passing between the Swedish and Norwegian kings, and that some great plans must be concerting between them. In winter King Canute sent messengers to Svithjod, to King Onund, with great gifts and messages of friendship. He also told Onund that he might sit altogether quiet in this strife between him and Olaf the Thick; "for thou, Onund," says he, "and thy kingdom, shall be in peace as far as I am concerned." When the ambassadors came to King Onund they presented the gifts which King Canute sent him, together with the friendly message. King Onund did not hear their speech very willingly, and the ambassadors could observe that King Onund was most inclined to a friendship with King Olaf. They returned accordingly, and told King Canute the result of their errand, and told him not to depend much upon the friendship of King Onund.

143.—THE EXPEDITION TO BJARMALAND.

This winter (1026) King Olaf sat in Sarpsborg, and was surrounded by a very great army of people. He sent the Halogalander Karle to the north country upon his business. Karle went first to the Uplands, then across the Dovrefield, and came down to Nidaros, where he received as much money as he had the king's order for, together with a good ship, such as he thought suitable for the voyage which the king had ordered him upon; and that was to proceed north to Bjarmaland. It was settled that the king should be in partnership with Karle, and each of them have the half of the profit. Early in spring Karle directed his course to Halogaland, where his brother Gunstein prepared to accompany him, having his own merchant goods with him. There were about twenty-five men in the ship; and in spring they sailed north to Finmark. When Thorer Hund heard this, he sent a man to the brothers with the verbal message that he intended in summer to go to Bjarmaland, and that he would sail with them, and that they should divide what booty they made equally between them. Karle sent him back the message that Thorer must have twenty-five men as they had, and they were willing to divide the booty that might be taken equally, but not the merchant goods which each had for himself. When Thorer's messenger came back he had put a stout long-ship he owned into the water, and rigged it, and he had put eighty men on board of his house-servants. Thorer alone had the command over this crew, and he alone had all the goods they might

acquire on the cruise. When Thorer was ready for sea he set out northwards along the coast, and found Karle a little north of Sandver. They then proceeded with good wind. Gunstein said to his brother, as soon as they met Thorer, that in his opinion Thorer was strongly manned. "I think," said he, "we had better turn back than sail so entirely in Thorer's power, for I do not trust him." Karle replies, "I will not turn back, although if I had known when we were at home on Langey Isle that Thorer Hund would join us on this voyage with so large a crew as he has, I would have taken more hands with us." The brothers spoke about it to Thorer, and asked what was the meaning of his taking more people with him than was agreed upon between them. He replies, "We have a large ship which requires many hands, and methinks there cannot be too many brave lads for so dangerous a cruise." They went in summer as fast in general as the vessels could go. When the wind was light the ship of the brothers sailed fastest, and they separated; but when the wind freshened Thorer overtook them. They were seldom together, but always in sight of each other. When they came to Bjarmaland they went straight to the merchant town, and the market began. All who had money to pay with got filled up with goods. Thorer also got a number of furs, and of beaver and sable skins. Karle had a considerable sum of money with him, with which he purchased skins and furs. When the fair was at an end they went out of the Vina river, and then the truce of the country people was also at an end. When they came out of the river they held a seaman's council, and Thorer

asked the crews if they would like to go on the land and get booty.

They replied, that they would like it well enough, if they saw the booty before their eyes.

Thorer replies, that there was booty to be got, if the voyage proved fortunate; but that in all probability there would be danger in the attempt.

All said they would try, if there was any chance of booty. Thorer explained, that it was so established in this land, that when a rich man died all his movable goods were divided between the dead man and his heirs. He got the half part, or the third part, or sometimes less, and that part was carried out into the forest and buried, —sometimes under a mound, sometimes in the earth, and sometimes even a house was built over it. He tells them at the same time to get ready for this expedition at the fall of day. It was resolved that one should not desert the other, and none should hold back when the commander ordered them to come on board again. They now left people behind to take care of the ships, and went on land, where they found flat fields at first, and then great forests. Thorer went first, and the brothers Karle and Gunstein in rear. Thorer commanded the people to observe the utmost silence. "And let us peel the bark off the trees," says he, "so that one tree-mark can be seen from the other." They came to a large cleared opening, where there was a high fence upon which there was a gate that was locked. Six men of the country people held watch every night at this fence, two at a time keeping guard, each two for a third part of the night. When

Thorer and his men came to the fence the guard had gone home, and those who should relieve them had not yet come upon guard. Thorer went to the fence, stuck his axe up in it above his head, hauled himself up by it, and so came over the fence, and inside the gate. Karle had also come over the fence, and to the inside of the gate; so that both came at once to the port, took the bar away, and opened the port; and then the people got in within the fence. Then said Thorer, "Within this fence there is a mound in which gold, and silver, and earth are all mixed together: seize that. But within here stands the Bjarmaland people's god Jomala: let no one be so presumptuous as to rob him." Thereupon they went to the mound and took as much of the money as they could carry away in their clothes, with which, as might be expected, much earth was mixed. Thereafter Thorer said that the people now should retreat. "And ye brothers, Karle and Gunstein," says he, "do ye lead the way, and I will go last." They all went accordingly out of the gate: but Thorer went back to Jomala, and took a silver bowl that stood upon his knee full of silver money. He put the silver in his purse, and put his arm within the handle of the bowl, and so went out of the gate. The whole troop had come without the fence; but when they perceived that Thorer had stayed behind, Karle returned to trace him, and when they met upon the path Thorer had the silver bowl with him. Thereupon Karle immediately ran to Jomala; and observing he had a thick gold ornament hanging around his neck, he lifted his axe, cut the string with which the ornament was tied behind his neck, and the stroke was so

strong that the head of Jomala rang with such a great sound that they were all astonished. Karle seized the ornament, and they all hastened away. But the moment the sound was made the watchmen came forward upon the cleared space, and blew their horns. Immediately the sound of the loor[1] was heard all around from every quarter, calling the people together. They hastened to the forest, and rushed into it; and heard the shouts and cries on the other side of the Bjarmaland people in pursuit. Thorer Hund went the last of the whole troop; and before him went two men carrying a great sack between them, in which was something that was like ashes. Thorer took this in his hand, and strewed it upon the footpath, and sometimes over the people. They came thus out of the woods, and upon the fields, but heard incessantly the Bjarmaland people pursuing with shouts and dreadful yells. The army of the Bjarmaland people rushed out after them upon the field, and on both sides of them; but neither the people nor their weapons came so near as to do them any harm: from which they perceived that the Bjarmaland people did not see them. Now when they reached their ships Karle and his brother went on board; for they were the foremost, and Thorer was far behind on the land. As soon as Karle and his men were on board they struck their tents, cast loose their land ropes, hoisted their sails, and their ship in all haste went to sea. Thorer and his people, on the other hand, did not get on so quickly, as their vessel was heavier to manage; so that when they got under sail, Karle and his people were far

[1]Ludr—the loor—is a long tube or roll of birch-bark used as a horn by the herdboys in the mountains in Norway.—L.

off from land. Both vessels sailed across the White sea (Gandvik). The nights were clear, so that both ships sailed night and day; until one day, towards the time the day turns to shorten, Karle and his people took up the land near an island, let down the sail, cast anchor, and waited until the slack-tide set in, for there was a strong rost before them. Now Thorer came up, and lay at anchor there also. Thorer and his people then put out a boat, went into it, and rowed to Karle's ship. Thorer came on board, and the brothers saluted him. Thorer told Karle to give him the ornament. "I think," said he, "that I have best earned the ornaments that have been taken, for methinks ye have to thank me for getting away without any loss of men; and also I think thou, Karle, set us in the greatest fright."

Karle replies, "King Olaf has the half part of all the goods I gather on this voyage, and I intend the ornament for him. Go to him, if you like, and it is possible he will give thee the ornament, although I took it from Jomala."

Then Thorer insisted that they should go upon the island, and divide the booty.

Gunstein says, "It is now the turn of the tide, and it is time to sail." Whereupon they began to raise their anchor.

When Thorer saw that, he returned to his boat and rowed to his own ship. Karle and his men had hoisted sail, and were come a long way before Thorer got under way. They now sailed so that the brothers were always in advance, and both vessels made all the haste they could. They sailed thus until they came to Geirsver, which is the

stein to remain with him, promising to assist him when opportunity offered. Gunstein took the invitation with thanks, and stayed with King Olaf.

144.—MEETING OF KING OLAF AND KING ONUND.

King Olaf was, as before related, in Sarpsborg the winter (1026) that King Canute was in Denmark. The Swedish king Onund rode across West Gautland the same winter, and had thirty hundred (3600) men with him. Men and messages passed between them; and they agreed to meet in spring at Konungahella. The meeting had been postponed, because they wished to know before they met what King Canute intended doing. As it was now approaching towards winter, King Canute made ready to go over to England with his forces, and left his son Hardaknut to rule in Denmark, and with him Earl Ulf, a son of Thorgils Sprakaleg. Ulf was married to Astrid, King Svein's daughter, and sister of Canute the Great. Their son Svein was afterwards king of Denmark. Earl Ulf was a very distinguished man. When the kings Olaf and Onund heard that Canute the Great had gone west to England, they hastened to hold their conference, and met at Konungahella, on the Gaut river. They had a joyful meeting, and had many friendly conversations, of which something might become known to the public; but they also spake often a great deal between themselves, with none but themselves two present, of which only some things afterwards were carried into effect, and thus became known to every one. At parting

the kings presented each other with gifts, and parted the best of friends. King Onund went up into Gautland, and Olaf northwards to Viken, and afterwards to Agder, and thence northwards along the coast, but lay a long time at Egersund waiting a wind. Here he heard that Erling Skjalgson, and the inhabitants of Jadar with him, had assembled a large force. One day the king's people were talking among themselves whether the wind was south or south-west, and whether with that wind they could sail past Jadar or not. The most said it was impossible to fetch round. Then answers Haldor Brynjolfson, "I am of opinion that we would go round Jadar with this wind fast enough if Erling Skjalgson had prepared a feast for us at Sole." Then King Olaf ordered the tents to be struck, and the vessels to be hauled out, which was done. They sailed the same day past Jadar with the best wind, and in the evening reached Hirtingsey, from whence the king proceeded to Hordaland, and was entertained there in guest-quarters.

145.—THORALF'S MURDER.

The same summer (1026) a ship sailed from Norway to the Farey Islands, with messengers carrying a verbal message from King Olaf, that one of his court-men, Leif Ossurson, or Lagman Gille, or Thoralf of Dimun, should come over to him from the Farey Islands. Now when this message came to the Farey Islands, and was delivered to those whom it concerned, they held a meeting among themselves, to consider what might lie under this

message, and they were all of opinion that the king wanted to inquire into the real state of the event which some said had taken place upon the islands; namely, the failure and disappearance of the former messengers of the king, and the loss of the two ships, of which not a man had been saved. It was resolved that Thoralf should undertake the journey. He got himself ready, and rigged out a merchant-vessel belonging to himself, manned with ten or twelve men. When it was ready, waiting a wind, it happened, at Austrey, in the house of Thrand of Gata, that he went one fine day into the room where his brother's two sons, Sigurd and Thord, sons of Thorlak, were lying upon the benches in the room. Gaut the Red was also there, who was one of their relations and a man of distinction. Sigurd was the oldest, and their leader in all things. Thord had a distinguished name, and was called Thord the Low, although in reality he was uncommonly tall, and yet in proportion more strong than large. Then Thrand said, "How many things are changed in the course of a man's life! When we were young, it was rare for young people who were able to do anything to sit or lie still upon a fine day, and our forefathers would scarcely have believed that Thoralf of Dimun would be bolder and more active than ye are. I believe the vessel I have standing here in the boat-house will be so old that it will rot under its coat of tar. Here are all the houses full of wool, which is neither used nor sold. It should not be so if I were a few winters younger." Sigurd sprang up, called upon Gaut and Thord, and said he would not endure Thrand's scoffs. They went out to the house-

servants, and launched the vessel upon the water, brought down a cargo, and loaded the ship. They had no want of a cargo at home, and the vessel's rigging was in good order, so that in a few days they were ready for sea. There were ten or twelve men in the vessel. Thoralf's ship and theirs had the same wind, and they were generally in sight of each other. They came to the land at Herna in the evening, and Sigurd with his vessel lay outside on the strand, but so that there was not much distance between the two ships. It happened towards evening, when it was dark, that just as Thoralf and his people were preparing to go to bed, Thoralf and another went on shore for a certain purpose. When they were ready, they prepared to return on board. The man who had accompanied Thoralf related afterwards this story,—that a cloth was thrown over his head, and that he was lifted up from the ground, and he heard a great bustle. He was taken away, and thrown head foremost down; but there was sea under him, and he sank under the water. When he got to land, he went to the place where he and Thoralf had been parted, and there he found Thoralf with his head cloven down to his shoulders, and dead. When the ship's people heard of it they carried the body out to the ship, and let it remain there all night. King Olaf was at that time in guest-quarters at Lygra, and thither they sent a message. Now a Thing was called by message-token, and the king came to the Thing. He had also ordered the Farey people of both vessels to be summoned, and they appeared at the Thing. Now when the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said, "Here an event

has happened which (and it is well that it is so) is very seldom heard of. Here has a good man been put to death, without any cause. Is there any man upon the Thing who can say who has done it?"

Nobody could answer.

"Then," said the king, "I cannot conceal my suspicion that this deed has been done by the Farey people themselves. It appears to me that it has been done in this way,--that Sigurd Thorlakson has killed the man, and Thord the Low has cast his comrade into the sea. I think, too, that the motives to this must have been to hinder Thoralf from telling about the misdeed of which he had information; namely, the murder which I suspect was committed upon my messengers."

When he had ended his speech, Sigurd Thorlakson stood up, and desired to be heard. "I have never before," said he, "spoken at a Thing, and I do not expect to be looked upon as a man of ready words. But I think there is sufficient necessity before me to reply something to this. I will venture to make a guess that the speech the king has made comes from some man's tongue who is of far less understanding and goodness than he is, and has evidently proceeded from those who are our enemies. It is speaking improbabilities to say that I could be Thoralf's murderer; for he was my foster-brother and good friend. Had the case been otherwise, and had there been anything outstanding between me and Thoralf, yet I am surely born with sufficient understanding to have done this deed in the Farey Islands, rather than here between your hands, sire. But I am ready to clear myself, and my whole

ship's crew, of this act, and to make oath according to what stands in your laws. Or, if ye find it more satisfactory, I offer to clear myself by the ordeal of hot iron; and I wish, sire, that you may be present yourself at the proof."

When Sigurd had ceased to speak there were many who supported his case, and begged the king that Sigurd might be allowed to clear himself of this accusation. They thought that Sigurd had spoken well, and that the accusation against him might be untrue.

The king replies, "It may be with regard to this man very differently, and if he is belied in any respect he must be a good man; and if not, he is the boldest I have ever met with: and I believe this is the case, and that he will bear witness to it himself."

At the desire of the people, the king took Sigurd's obligation to take the iron ordeal: he should come the following day to Lygra, where the bishop should preside at the ordeal; and so the Thing closed. The king went back to Lygra, and Sigurd and his comrades to their ship.

As soon as it began to be dark at night Sigurd said to his ship's people, "To say the truth, we have come into a great misfortune; for a great lie is got up against us, and this king is a deceitful, crafty man. Our fate is easy to be foreseen where he rules; for first he made Thoralf be slain, and then made us the misdoers, without benefit of redemption by fine. For him it is an easy matter to manage the iron ordeal, so that I fear he will come ill off who tries it against him. Now there is coming a brisk mountain breeze, blowing right out of the sound and off the

land; and it is my advice that we hoist our sail, and set out to sea. Let Thrand himself come with his wool to market another summer; but if I get away, it is my opinion I shall never think of coming to Norway again."

His comrades thought the advice good, hoisted their sail, and in the night-time took to the open sea with all speed. They did not stop until they came to Farey, and home to Gata. Thrand was ill-pleased with their voyage, and they did not answer him in a very friendly way; but they remained at home, however, with Thrand. The morning after, King Olaf heard of Sigurd's departure, and heavy reports went round about this case; and there were many who believed that the accusation against Sigurd was true, although they had denied and opposed it before the king. King Olaf spoke but little about the matter, but seemed to know of a certainty that the suspicion he had taken up was founded in truth. The king afterwards proceeded in his progress, taking up his abode where it was provided for him.

146.—OF THE ICELANDERS.

King Olaf called before him the men who had come from Iceland, Thorod Snorrason, Geller Thorkelson, Stein Skaptason, and Egil Halson, and spoke to them thus:—"Ye have spoken to me much in summer about making yourselves ready to return to Iceland, and I have never given you a distinct answer. Now I will tell you what my intention is. Thee, Geller, I propose to allow to return, if thou wilt carry my message there; but none of the other Icelanders who are now here may go to Iceland before I

have heard how the message which thou, Geller, shalt bring thither has been received."

When the king had made this resolution known, it appeared to those who had a great desire to return, and were thus forbidden, that they were unreasonably and hardly dealt with, and that they were placed in the condition of unfree men. In the meantime Geller got ready for his journey, and sailed in summer (1026) to Iceland, taking with him the message he was to bring before the Thing the following summer (1027). The king's message was, that he required the Icelanders to adopt the laws which he had set in Norway, also to pay him thane-tax and nose-tax;[1] namely, a penny for every nose, and the penny at the rate of ten pennies to the yard of wadmal.[2] At the same time he promised them his friendship if they accepted, and threatened them with all his vengeance if they refused his proposals.

The people sat long in deliberation on this business; but at last they were unanimous in refusing all the taxes and burdens which were demanded of them. That summer Geller returned back from Iceland to Norway to King Olaf, and found him in autumn in the east in Viken, just as he had come from Gautland; of which I shall speak hereafter in this story of King Olaf. Towards the end of autumn King Olaf repaired north to Throndhjem, and went with his people to Nidaros, where he ordered a

[1]Nefgildi (nef = nose), a nose-tax or poll-tax payable to the king. This ancient "nose-tax" was also imposed by the Norsemen on conquered countries, the penalty for defaulters being the loss of their nose.

[2]Wadmal was the coarse woollen cloth made in Iceland, and so generally used for clothing that it was a measure of value in the North, like money, for other commodities.—L.

winter residence to be prepared for him. The winter (1027) that he passed here in the merchant-town of Nidaros was the thirteenth year of his reign.

147.—OF THE JAMTALAND PEOPLE.

There was once a man called Ketil Jamte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparby, in the Throndhjem district. He fled over the ridge of mountains from Eystein Illrade, cleared the forest, and settled the country now called the province of Jamtaland. A great many people joined him from the Throndhjem land, on account of the disturbances there; for this King Eystein had laid taxes on the Throndhjem people, and set his dog, called Saur, to be king over them. Thorer Helsing was Ketil's grandson, and he colonised the province called Helsingjaland, which is named after him. When Harald Harfager subdued the kingdom by force, many people fled out of the country from him, both Throndhjem people and Naumudal people, and thus new settlements were added to Jamtaland; and some settlers went even eastwards to Helsingjaland and down to the Baltic coast, and all became subjects of the Swedish king. While Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was over Norway there was peace, and merchant traffic from Throndhjem to Jamtaland; and, as he was an excellent king, the Jamtalanders came from the east to him, paid him scat, and he gave them laws and administered justice. They would rather submit to his government than to the Swedish king's, because they were of Norwegian race; and all the Helsingjaland people, who had their descent from the north side of the mountain ridge, did the same. This con-

tinued long after those times, until Olaf the Thick and the Swedish king Olaf quarrelled about the boundaries. Then the Jamtaland and Helsingjaland people went back to the Swedish king; and then the forest of Eid was the eastern boundary of the land, and the mountain ridge, or keel of the country, the northern: and the Swedish king took scat of Helsingjaland, and also of Jamtaland. Now, thought the king of Norway, Olaf, in consequence of the agreement between him and the Swedish king, the scat of Jamtaland should be paid differently than before; although it had long been established that the Jamtaland people paid their scat to the Swedish king, and that he appointed officers over the country. The Swedes would listen to nothing, but that all the land to the east of the keel of the country belonged to the Swedish king. Now this went so, as it often happens, that although the kings were brothers-in-law and relations, each would hold fast the dominions which he thought he had a right to. King Olaf had sent a message round in Jamtaland, declaring it to be his will that the Jamtaland people should be subject to him, threatening them with violence if they refused; but the Jamtaland people preferred being subjects of the Swedish king.

148.—STEIN'S STORY.

The Icelanders, Thorod Snorrason and Stein Skaptason, were ill-pleased at not being allowed to do as they liked. Stein was a remarkably handsome man, dexterous at all feats, a great poet, splendid in his apparel, and very ambitious of distinction. His father, Skapte, had com-

posed a poem on King Olaf, which he had taught Stein, with the intention that he should bring it to King Olaf. Stein could not now restrain himself from making the king reproaches in word and speech, both in verse and prose. Both he and Thorod were imprudent in their conversation, and said the king would be looked upon as a worse man than those who, under faith and law, had sent their sons to him, as he now treated them as men without liberty. The king was angry at this. One day Stein stood before the king, and asked if he would listen to the poem which his father Skapte had composed about him. The king replies, "Thou must first repeat that, Stein, which thou hast composed about me." Stein replies, that it was not the case that he had composed any. "I am no skald, sire," said he; "and if I even could compose anything, it, and all that concerns me, would appear to thee of little value." Stein then went out, but thought he perceived what the king alluded to. Thorgeir, one of the king's land-bailiffs, who managed one of his farms in Orkadal, happened to be present, and heard the conversation of the king and Stein, and soon afterwards Thorgeir returned home. One night Stein left the city, and his footboy with him. They went up Gaularas and into Orkadal. One evening they came to one of the king's farms which Thorgeir had the management of, and Thorgeir invited Stein to pass the night there, and asked where he was travelling to. Stein begged the loan of a horse and sledge, for he saw they were just driving home corn.

Thorgeir replies, "I do not exactly see how it stands with thy journey, and if thou art travelling with the

king's leave. The other day, methinks, the words were not very sweet that passed between the king and thee."

Stein said, "If it be so that I am not my own master for the king, yet I will not submit to such treatment from his slaves;" and, drawing his sword, he killed the land-bailiff. Then he took the horse, put the boy upon him, and sat himself in the sledge, and so drove the whole night. They travelled until they came to Surnadal in More. There they had themselves ferried across the fjord, and proceeded onwards as fast as they could. They told nobody about the murder, but wherever they came called themselves king's men, and met good entertainment everywhere. One day at last they came towards evening to Giske Isle, to Thorberg Arnason's house. He was not at home himself, but his wife Ragnhild, a daughter of Erling Skjalgson, was. There Stein was well received, because formerly there had been great friendship between them. It had once happened, namely, that Stein, on his voyage from Iceland with his own vessel, had come to Giske from sea, and had anchored at the island. At that time Ragnhild was in the pains of childbirth, and very ill, and there was no priest on the island, or in the neighbourhood of it. There came a message to the merchant-vessel to inquire if, by chance, there was a priest on board. There happened to be a priest in the vessel, who was called Bard; but he was a young man from Westfjord, who had little learning. The messengers begged the priest to go with them, but he thought it was a difficult matter; for he knew his own ignorance, and would not go. Stein added his word to persuade the priest. The

priest replies, "I will go if thou wilt go with me; for then I will have confidence, if I should require advice." Stein said he was willing; and they went forthwith to the house, and to where Ragnhild was in labour. Soon after she brought forth a female child, which appeared to be rather weak. Then the priest baptized the infant, and Stein held it at the baptism, at which it got the name of Thora; and Stein gave it a gold ring. Ragnhild promised Stein her perfect friendship, and bade him come to her whenever he thought he required her help. Stein replied that he would hold no other female child at baptism, and then they parted. Now it was come to the time when Stein required this kind promise of Ragnhild to be fulfilled, and he told her what had happened, and that the king's wrath had fallen upon him. She answered, that all the aid she could give should stand at his service; but bade him wait for Thorberg's arrival. She then showed him to a seat beside her son Eystein Orre, who was then twelve years old. Stein presented gifts to Ragnhild and Eystein. Thorberg had already heard how Stein had conducted himself before he got home, and was rather vexed at it. Ragnhild went to him, and told him how matters stood with Stein, and begged Thorberg to receive him, and take care of him.

Thorberg replies, "I have heard that the king, after sending out a message-token, held a Thing concerning the murder of Thorgeir, and has condemned Stein as having fled the country, and likewise that the king is highly incensed; and I have too much sense to take the cause of a foreigner in hand, and draw upon myself the king's wrath.

Let Stein, therefore, withdraw from hence as quickly as thou canst."

Ragnhild replied, that they should either both go or both stay.

Thorberg told her to go where she pleased. "For I expect," said he, "that wherever thou goest thou wilt soon come back, for here is thy importance greatest."

Her son Eystein Orre then stood forward, and said he would not stay behind if Ragnhild goes.

Thorberg said that they showed themselves very stiff and obstinate in this matter. "And it appears that ye must have your way in it, since ye take it so near to heart; but thou art reckoning too much, Ragnhild, upon thy descent, in paying so little regard to King Olaf's word."

Ragnhild replied, "If thou art so much afraid to keep Stein with thee here, go with him to my father Erling, or give him attendants, so that he may get there in safety." Thorberg said he would not send Stein there; "for there are enough of things besides to enrage the king against Erling." Stein thus remained there all winter (1027).

After Yule a king's messenger came to Thorberg, with the order that Thorberg should come to him before midsummer; and the order was serious and severe. Thorberg laid it before his friends, and asked their advice if he should venture to go to the king after what had taken place. The greater number dissuaded him, and thought it more advisable to let Stein slip out of his hands than to venture within the king's power; but Thorberg himself had rather more inclination not to decline the journey.

Soon after Thorberg went to his brother Fin, told him the circumstances, and asked him to accompany him. Fin replied, that he thought it foolish to be so completely under woman's influence that he dared not, on account of his wife, keep the fealty and law of his sovereign.

"Thou art free," replied Thorberg, "to go with me or not; but I believe it is more fear of the king than love to him that keeps thee back." And so they parted in anger.

Then Thorberg went to his brother Arne Arnason, and asked him to go with him to the king. Arne says, "It appears to me wonderful that such a sensible, prudent man, should fall into such a misfortune, without necessity, as to incur the king's indignation. It might be excused if it were thy relation or foster-brother whom thou hadst thus sheltered; but not at all that thou shouldst take up an Iceland man, and harbour the king's outlaw, to the injury of thyself and all thy relations."

Thorberg replies, "It stands good, according to the proverb,—a rotten branch will be found in every tree. My father's greatest misfortune evidently was that he had such ill luck in producing sons that at last he produced one incapable of acting, and without any resemblance to our race, and whom in truth I never would have called brother, if it were not that it would have been to my mother's shame to have refused."

Thorberg turned away in a gloomy temper, and went home. Thereafter he sent a message to his brother Kalf in the Throndhjem district, and begged him to meet him at Agdanes; and when the messengers found Kalf he

promised, without more ado, to make the journey. Ragnhild sent men east to Jadar to her father Erling, and begged him to send people. Erling's sons, Sigurd and Thord, came out, each with a ship of twenty benches of rowers and ninety men. When they came north Thorberg received them joyfully, entertained them well, and prepared for the voyage with them. Thorberg had also a vessel with twenty benches, and they steered their course northwards. When they came to the mouth of the Throndhjem fjord Thorberg's two brothers, Fin and Arne, were there already, with two ships each of twenty benches. Thorberg met his brothers with joy, and observed that his whetstone had taken effect; and Fin replied he seldom needed sharpening for such work. Then they proceeded north with all their forces to Throndhjem, and Stein was along with them. When they came to Agdanes, Kalf Arnason was there before them; and he also had a well-manned ship of twenty benches. With this war-force they sailed up to Nidaros, where they lay all night. The morning after they had a consultation with each other. Kalf and Erling's sons were for attacking the town with all their forces, and leaving the event to fate; but Thorberg wished that they should first proceed with moderation, and make an offer; in which opinion Fin and Arne also concurred. It was accordingly resolved that Fin and Arne, with a few men, should first wait upon the king. The king had previously heard that they had come so strong in men, and was therefore very sharp in his speech. Fin offered to pay mulct for Thorberg, and also for Stein, and bade the king to fix what the penalties

should be, however large; stipulating only for Thorberg safety and his fiefs, and for Stein life and limb.

The king replies, "It appears to me that ye come from home so equipped that ye can determine half as much as I can myself, or more; but this I expected least of all from you brothers, that ye should come against me with an army: and this counsel, I can observe, has its origin from the people of Jadar; but ye have no occasion to offer me money in mulct."

Fin replies, "We brothers have collected men, not to offer hostility to you, sire, but to offer rather our services; but if you will bear down Thorberg altogether, we must all go to King Canute the Great with such forces as we have."

Then the king looked at him, and said, "If ye brothers will give your oaths that ye will follow me in the country and out of the country, and not part from me without my leave and permission, and shall not conceal from me any treasonable design that may come to your knowledge against me, then will I agree to a peace with you brothers."

Then Fin returned to his forces, and told the conditions which the king had proposed to them. Now they held a council upon it, and Thorberg, for his part, said he would accept the terms offered. "I have no wish," says he, "to fly from my property, and seek foreign masters; but, on the contrary, will always consider it an honour to follow King Olaf, and be where he is." Then says Kalf, "I will make no oath to King Olaf, but will be with him always, so long as I retain my fiefs and dignities, and

so long as the king will be my friend; and my opinion is that we should all do the same." Fin says, "We will venture to let King Olaf himself determine in this matter." Arne Arnason says, "I was resolved to follow thee, brother Thorberg, even if thou hadst given battle to King Olaf, and I shall certainly not leave thee for listening to better counsel; so I intend to follow thee and Fin, and accept the conditions ye have taken."

Thereupon the brothers Thorberg, Fin, and Arne, went on board a vessel, rowed into the fjord, and waited upon the king. The agreement went accordingly into fulfilment, so that the brothers gave their oaths to the king. Then Thorberg endeavored to make peace for Stein with the king; but the king replied that Stein might for him depart in safety, and go where he pleased, but "in my house he can never be again." Then Thorberg and his brothers went back to their men. Kalf went to Eggja, and Fin to the king; and Thorberg, with the other men, went south to their homes. Stein went with Erling's sons; but early in the spring (1027) he went west to England into the service of Canute the Great, and was long with him, and was treated with great distinction.

149.—FIN ARNASON'S EXPEDITION TO HALOGALAND.

Now when Fin Arnason had been a short time with King Olaf, the king called him to a conference, along with some other persons he usually held consultation with; and in this conference the king spoke to this effect:—"The decision remains fixed in my mind that in spring I should raise the whole country to a levy both of men

and ships, and then proceed, with all the force I can muster, against King Canute the Great: for I know for certain that he does not intend to treat as a jest the claim he has awakened upon my kingdom. Now I let thee know my will, Fin Arnason, that thou proceed on my errand to Halogaland, and raise the people there to an expedition, men and ships, and summon that force to meet me at Agdanes." Then the king named other men whom he sent to Throndhjem, and some southwards in the country, and he commanded that this order should be circulated through the whole land. Of Fin's voyage we have to relate that he had with him a ship with about thirty men, and when he was ready for sea he prosecuted his journey until he came to Halogaland. There he summoned the bondes to a Thing, laid before them his errand, and craved a levy. The bondes in that district had large vessels, suited to a levy expedition, and they obeyed the king's message, and rigged their ships. Now when Fin came farther north in Halogaland he held a Thing again, and sent some of his men from him to crave a levy where he thought it necessary. He sent also men to Bjarkey Island to Thorer Hund, and there, as elsewhere, craved the quota to the levy. When the message came to Thorer he made himself ready, and manned with his house-servants the same vessel he had sailed with on his cruise to Bjarmaland, and which he equipped at his own expense. Fin summoned all the people of Halogaland who were to the north to meet at Vagar. There came a great fleet together in spring, and they waited there until Fin returned from the North. Thorer Hund had also come

there. When Fin arrived he ordered the signal to sound for all the people of the levy to attend a House-Thing; and at it all the men produced their weapons, and also the fighting men from each ship-district were mustered. When that was all finished Fin said, "I have also to bring thee a salutation, Thorer Hund, from King Olaf, and to ask thee what thou wilt offer him for the murder of his court-man Karle, or for the robbery in taking the king's goods north in Lengjuvik. I have the king's orders to settle that business, and I wait thy answer to it."

Thorer looked about him, and saw standing on both sides many fully armed men, among whom were Gunstein and others of Karle's kindred. Then said Thorer, "My proposal is soon made. I will refer altogether to the king's pleasure the matter he thinks he has against me."

Fin replies, "Thou must put up with a less honour; for thou must refer the matter altogether to my decision, if any agreement is to take place."

Thorer replies, "And even then I think it will stand well with my case, and therefore I will not decline referring it to thee."

Thereupon Thorer came forward, and confirmed what he said by giving his hand upon it; and Fin repeated first all the words he should say.

Fin now pronounced his decision upon the agreement, —that Thorer should pay to the king ten marks of gold, and to Gunstein and the other kindred ten marks, and for the robbery and loss of goods ten marks more; and all which should be paid immediately.

Thorer says, "This is a heavy money mulct."

"Without it," replies Fin, "there will be no agreement."

Thorer says, there must time be allowed to gather so much in loan from his followers; but Fin told him to pay immediately on the spot; and besides, Thorer should lay down the great ornament which he took from Karle when he was dead. Thorer asserted that he had not got the ornament. Then Gunstein pressed forward, and said that Karle had the ornament around his neck when they parted, but it was gone when they took up his corpse. Thorer said he had not observed any ornament; but if there was any such thing, it must be lying at home in Bjarkey. Then Fin put the point of his spear to Thorer's breast, and said that he must instantly produce the ornament; on which Thorer took the ornament from his neck and gave it to Fin. Thereafter Thorer turned away, and went on board his ship. Fin, with many other men, followed him, went through the whole vessel, and took up the hatches. At the mast they saw two very large casks; and Fin asked, "What are these puncheons?"

Thorer replies, "It is my liquor."

Fin says, "Why don't you give us something to drink then, comrade, since you have so much liquor?"

Thorer ordered his men to run off a bowlfull from the puncheons, from which Fin and his people got liquor of the best quality. Now Fin ordered Thorer to pay the mulcts. Thorer went backwards and forwards through the ship, speaking now to the one, now to the other, and Fin calling out to produce the pence. Thorer begged

him to go to the shore, and said he would bring the money there, and Fin with his men went on shore. Then Thorer came and paid silver; of which, from one purse, there were weighed ten marks. Thereafter Thorer brought many knotted nightcaps; and in some was one mark, in others half a mark, and in others some small money. "This is money my friends and other good people have lent me," said he; "for I think all my travelling money is gone." Then Thorer went back again to his ship, and returned, and paid the silver by little and little; and this lasted so long that the day was drawing towards evening. When the Thing had closed the people had gone to their vessels, and made ready to depart; and as fast as they were ready they hoisted sail and set out, so that most of them were under sail. When Fin saw that they were most of them under sail, he ordered his men to get ready too; but as yet little more than a third part of the mulct had been paid. Then Fin said, "This goes on very slowly, Thorer, with the payment. I see it costs thee a great deal to pay money. I shall now let it stand for the present, and what remains thou shalt pay to the king himself." Fin then got up and went away.

Thorer replies, "I am well enough pleased, Fin, to part now; but the good will is not wanting to pay this debt, so that both thou and the king shall say it is not unpaid."

Then Fin went on board his ship, and followed the rest of his fleet. Thorer was late before he was ready to come out of the harbour. When the sails were hoisted he steered out over Westfjord, and went to sea, keeping south

along the land so far off that the hill-tops were half sunk, and soon the land altogether was sunk from view by the sea. Thorer held this course until he got into the English sea, and landed in England. He betook himself to King Canute forthwith, and was well received by him. It then came out that Thorer had with him a great deal of property; and, with other things, all the money he and Karle had taken in Bjarmaland. In the great liquor-casks there were sides within the outer sides, and the liquor was between them. The rest of the casks were filled with furs, and beaver and sable skins. Thorer was then with King Canute. Fin came with his forces to King Olaf, and related to him how all had gone upon his voyage, and told at the same time his suspicion that Thorer had left the country, and gone west to England to King Canute. "And there I fear he will cause as much trouble."

The king replies, "I believe that Thorer must be our enemy, and it appears to me always better to have him at a distance than near."

150.—DISPUTE BETWEEN HAREK AND ASMUND.

Asmund Grankelson had been this winter (1027) in Halogaland in his sheriffdom, and was at home with his father Grankel. There lies a rock out in the sea, on which there is both seal and bird catching, and a fishing ground, and egg-gathering; and from old times it had been an appendage to the farm which Grankel owned, but now Harek of Thjotta laid claim to it. It had gone so far, that some years he had taken by force all the gain of this

rock; but Asmund and his father thought that they might expect the king's help in all cases in which the right was upon their side. Both father and son went therefore in spring to Harek, and brought him a message and tokens from King Olaf that he should drop his claim. Harek answered Asmund crossly, because he had gone to the king with such insinuations—"for the just right is upon my side. Thou shouldst learn moderation, Asmund, although thou hast so much confidence in the king's favour. It has succeeded with thee to kill some chiefs, and leave their slaughter unpaid for by any mulct; and also to plunder us, although we thought ourselves at least equal to all of equal birth, and thou art far from being my equal in family."

Asmund replies, "Many have experienced from thee, Harek, that thou art of great connections, and too great power; and many in consequence have suffered loss in their property through thee. But it is likely that now thou must turn thyself elsewhere, and not against us with thy violence, and not go altogether against law, as thou art now doing." Then they separated.

Harek sent ten or twelve of his house-servants with a large rowing boat, with which they rowed to the rock, took all that was to be got upon it, and loaded their boat. But when they were ready to return home, Asmund Grankelson came with thirty men, and ordered them to give up all they had taken. Harek's house-servants were not quick in complying, so that Asmund attacked them. Some of Harek's men were cudgelled, some wounded, some thrown into the sea, and all they had caught was

taken from on board of their boat, and Asmund and his people took it along with them. Then Harek's servants came home, and told him the event. Harek replies, "That is called news indeed that seldom happens; never before has it happened that my people have been beaten."

The matter dropped. Harek never spoke about it, but was very cheerful. In spring, however, Harek rigged out a cutter of twenty seats of rowers, and manned it with his house-servants, and the ship was remarkably well fitted out both with people and all necessary equipment; and Harek went to the levy; but when he came to King Olaf, Asmund was there before him. The king summoned Harek and Asmund to him, and reconciled them so that they left the matter entirely to him. Asmund then produced witnesses to prove that Grankel had owned the rock, and the king gave judgment accordingly. The case had a one-sided result. No mulct was paid for Harek's house-servants, and the rock was declared to be Grankel's. Harek observed it was no disgrace to obey the king's decision, whatever way the case itself was decided.

151.—THOROD'S STORY.

Thorod Snorrason had remained in Norway, according to King Olaf's commands, when Geller Thorkelson got leave to go to Iceland, as before related. He remained there (1027) with King Olaf, but was ill pleased that he was not free to travel where he pleased. Early in winter, King Olaf, when he was in Nidaros, made it known that he would send people to Jamtaland to collect

the scat; but nobody had any great desire to go on this business, after the fate of those whom King Olaf had sent before,—namely, Thrand White and others, twelve in number, who lost their lives, as before related; and the Jamtalanders had ever since been subject to the Swedish king. Thorod Snorrason now offered to undertake this journey, for he cared little what became of him if he could but become his own master again. The king consented, and Thorod set out with eleven men in company. They came east to Jamtaland, and went to a man called Thorar, who was lagman, and a person in high estimation. They met with a hospitable reception; and when they had been there a while, they explained their business to Thorar. He replied, that other men and chiefs of the country had in all respects as much power and right to give an answer as he had, and for that purpose he would call together a Thing. It was so done; the message-token was sent out, and a numerous Thing assembled. Thorar went to the Thing, but the messengers in the meantime remained at home. At the Thing, Thorar laid the business before the people, but all were unanimous that no scat should be paid to the king of Norway; and some were for hanging the messengers, others for sacrificing them to the gods. At last it was resolved to hold them fast until the king of Sweden's sheriffs arrived, and they could treat them as they pleased with consent of the people; and that, in the meantime, this decision should be concealed, and the messengers treated well, and detained under pretext that they must wait until the scat is collected; and that they should be separated, and placed

two and two, as if for the convenience of boarding them. Thorod and another remained in Thorar's house. There was a great Yule feast and ale-drinking, to which each brought his own liquor; for there were many peasants in the village, who all drank in company together at Yule. There was another village not far distant, where Thorar's brother-in-law dwelt, who was a rich and powerful man, and had a grown-up son. The brothers-in-law intended to pass the Yule in drinking feasts, half of it at the house of the one and half with the other; and the feast began at Thorar's house. The brothers-in-law drank together, and Thorod and the sons of the peasants by themselves; and it was a drinking match. In the evening words arose, and comparisons between the men of Sweden and of Norway, and then between their kings both of former times and at the present, and of the manslaughters and robberies that had taken place between the countries. Then said the peasants' sons, "If our king has lost most people, his sheriffs will make it even with the lives of twelve men when they come from the south after Yule; and ye little know, ye silly fools, why ye are kept here." Thorod took notice of these words, and many made jest about it, and scoffed at them and their king. When the ale began to talk out of the hearts of the Jamtalanders, what Thorod had before long suspected became evident. The day after Thorod and his comrade took all their clothes and weapons, and laid them ready; and at night, when the people were all asleep, they fled to the forest. The next morning, when the Jamtalanders were aware of their flight, men set out after them with dogs to trace

them, and found them in a wood in which they had concealed themselves. They brought them home to a room in which there was a deep cellar, into which they were thrown, and the door locked upon them. They had little meat, and only the clothes they had on them. In the middle of Yule, Thorar, with all his freeborn men, went to his brother's-in-law, where he was to be a guest until the last of Yule. Thorar's slaves were to keep guard upon the cellar, and they were provided with plenty of liquor; but as they observed no moderation in drinking, they became towards evening confused in the head with the ale. As they were quite drunk, those who had to bring meat to the prisoners in the cellar said among themselves that they should want for nothing. Thorod amused the slaves by singing to them. They said he was a clever man, and gave him a large candle that was lighted; and the slaves who were in went to call the others to come in; but they were all so confused with the ale, that in going out they neither locked the cellar nor the room after them. Now Thorod and his comrades tore up their skin clothes in strips, knotted them together, made a noose at one end, and threw up the rope on the floor of the room. It fastened itself around a chest, by which they tried to haul themselves up. Thorod lifted up his comrade until he stood on his shoulders, and from thence scrambled up through the hatchhole. There was no want of ropes in the chamber, and he threw a rope down to Thorod; but when he tried to draw him up, he could not move him from the spot. Then Thorod told him to cast the rope over a cross-beam that was in the

house, make a loop in it, and place as much wood and stones in the loop as would outweigh him; and the heavy weight went down into the cellar, and Thorod was drawn up by it. Now they took as much clothes as they required in the room; and among other things they took some reindeer hides, out of which they cut sandals, and bound them under their feet, with the hoofs of the reindeer feet trailing behind. But before they set off they set fire to a large corn barn which was close by, and then ran out into the pitch-dark night. The barn blazed, and set fire to many other houses in the village. Thorod and his comrade travelled the whole night until they came to a lonely wood, where they concealed themselves when it was daylight. In the morning they were missed. There was chase made with dogs to trace the footsteps all round the house; but the hounds always came back to the house, for they had the smell of the reindeer hoofs, and followed the scent back on the road that the hoofs had left, and therefore could not find the right direction. Thorod and his comrade wandered long about in the desert forest, and came one evening to a small house, and went in. A man and a woman were sitting by the fire. The man called himself Thorer, and said it was his wife who was sitting there, and the hut belonged to them. The peasant asked them to stop there, at which they were well pleased. He told them that he had come to this place, because he had fled from the inhabited district on account of a murder. Thorod and his comrade were well received, and they all got their supper at the fireside; and then the benches were cleared for them, and they lay down to sleep, but the fire

was still burning with a clear light. Thorod saw a man come in from another house, and never had he seen so stout a man. He was dressed in a scarlet cloak beset with gold clasps, and was of very handsome appearance. Thorod heard him scold them for taking guests, when they had scarcely food for themselves. The housewife said, "Be not angry, brother; seldom such a thing happens; and rather do them some good too, for thou hast better opportunity to do so than we." Thorod heard also the stout man named by the name of Arnliot Gelline, and observed that the woman of the house was his sister. Thorod had heard speak of Arnliot as the greatest of robbers and malefactors. Thorod and his companion slept the first part of the night, for they were wearied with walking; but when a third of the night was still to come, Arnliot awoke them, told them to get up, and make ready to depart. They arose immediately, put on their clothes, and some breakfast was given them; and Arnliot gave each of them also a pair of skees. Arnliot made himself ready to accompany them, and got upon his skees, which were both broad and long; but scarcely had he swung his skee-staff before he was a long way past them. He waited for them, and said they would make no progress in this way, and told them to stand upon the edge of his skees beside him. They did so. Thorod stood nearest to him, and held by Arnliot's belt, and his comrade held by him. Arnliot strode on as quickly with them both, as if he was alone and without any weight. The following day they came, towards night, to a lodge for travellers, struck fire, and prepared some food; but

Arnliot told them to throw away nothing of their food, neither bones nor crumbs. Arnliot took a silver plate out of the pocket of his cloak, and ate from it. When they were done eating, Arnliot gathered up the remains of their meal, and they prepared to go to sleep. In the other end of the house there was a loft upon cross-beams, and Arnliot and the others went up, and laid themselves down to sleep. Arnliot had a large halberd, of which the upper part was mounted with gold, and the shaft was so long that with his arm stretched out he could scarcely touch the top of it; and he was girt with a sword. They had both their weapons and their clothes up in the loft beside them. Arnliot, who lay outermost in the loft, told them to be perfectly quiet. Soon after twelve men came to the house, who were merchants going with their wares to Jamtaland; and when they came into the house they made a great disturbance, were merry, and made a great fire before them; and when they took their supper they cast away all the bones around them. They then prepared to go to sleep, and laid themselves down upon the benches around the fire. When they had been asleep a short time, a huge witch came into the house; and when she came in, she carefully swept together all the bones and whatever was of food kind into a heap, and threw it into her mouth. Then she gripped the man who was nearest to her, riving and tearing him asunder, and threw him upon the fire. The others awoke in dreadful fright, and sprang up; but she took them, and put them one by one to death, so that only one remained in life. He ran under the loft calling for help, and if there was any one

on the loft to help him. Arnliot reached down his hand, seized him by the shoulder, and drew him up into the loft. The witch-wife had turned towards the fire, and began to eat the men who were roasting. Now Arnliot stood up, took his halberd, and struck her between the shoulders, so that the point came out at her breast. She writhed with it, gave a dreadful shriek, and sprang up. The halberd slipped from Arnliot's hands, and she ran out with it. Arnliot then went in; cleared away the dead corpses out of the house; set the door and the door-posts up, for she had torn them down in going out; and they slept the rest of the night. When the day broke they got up; and first they took their breakfast. When they had got food, Arnliot said, "Now we must part here. Ye can proceed upon the new-traced path the merchants have made in coming here yesterday. In the meantime I will seek after my halberd, and in reward for my labour I will take so much of the goods these men had with them as I find useful to me. Thou, Thorod, must take my salutation to King Olaf; and say to him that he is the man I am most desirous to see, although my salutation may appear to him of little worth." Then he took his silver plate, wiped it dry with a cloth, and said, "Give King Olaf this plate; salute him, and say it is from me." Then they made themselves ready for their journey, and parted. Thorod went on with his comrade and the man of the merchants' company who had escaped. He proceeded until he came to King Olaf in the town (Nidaros); told the king all that had happened, and presented to him the silver plate. The king said it was wrong that

Arnliot himself had not come to him; "for it is a pity so brave a hero, and so distinguished a man, should have given himself up to misdeeds."

Thorod remained the rest of the winter with the king, and in summer got leave to return to Iceland; and he and King Olaf parted the best of friends.

152.—KING OLAF'S LEVY OF MEN.

King Olaf made ready in spring (1027) to leave Nidaros, and many people were assembled about him, both from Throndhjem and the Northern country; and when he was ready he proceeded first with his men to More, where he gathered the men of the levy, and did the same at Raumsdal. He went from thence to South More. He lay a long time at the Herey Isles waiting for his forces; and he often held House-things, as many reports came to his ears about which he thought it necessary to hold councils. In one of these Things he made a speech, in which he spoke of the loss he suffered from the Farey islanders. "The scat which they promised me," he said, "is not forthcoming; and I now intend to send men thither after it." Then he proposed to different men to undertake this expedition; but the answer was, that all declined the adventure.

Then there stood up a stout and very remarkable looking man in the Thing. He was clad in a red kirtle, had a helmet on his head, a sword in his belt, and a large halberd in his hands. He took up the word and said, "In truth here is a great want of men. Ye have a good king; but ye are bad servants who say no to this expedition he

offers you, although ye have received many gifts of friendship and tokens of honour from him. I have hitherto been no friend of the king, and he has been my enemy, and says, besides, that he has good grounds for being so. Now, I offer, sire, to go upon this expedition, if no better will undertake it."

The king answers, "Who is this brave man who replies to my offer? Thou showest thyself different from the other men here present, in offering thyself for this expedition from which they excuse themselves, although I expected they would willingly have undertaken it; but I do not know thee in the least, and do not know thy name."

He replies, "My name, sire, is not difficult to know, and I think thou hast heard my name before. I am Karl Morske."

The king—"So this is Karl! I have indeed heard thy name before; and, to say the truth, there was a time when our meeting must have been such, if I had had my will, that thou shouldst not have had to tell it now. But I will not show myself worse than thou, but will join my thanks and my favour to the side of the help thou hast offered me. Now thou shalt come to me, Karl, and be my guest to-day; and then we shall consult together about this business." Karl said it should be so.

153—KARL MORSKE'S STORY.

Karl Morske had been a viking, and a celebrated robber. Often had the king sent out men against him, and wished to make an end of him; but Karl, who was a man of high connection, was quick in all his doings, and besides a man

of great dexterity, and expert in all feats. Now when Karl had undertaken this business the king was reconciled to him, gave him his friendship, and let him be fitted out in the best manner for this expedition. There were about twenty men in the ship; and the king sent messages to his friends in the Farey Islands, and recommended him also to Leif Ossurson and Lagman Gille, for aid and defence; and for this purpose furnished Karl with tokens of the full powers given him. Karl set out as soon as he was ready; and as he got a favourable breeze soon came to the Farey Islands, and landed at Thorshavn, in the island Straumey. A Thing was called, to which there came a great number of people. Thrand of Gata came with a great retinue, and Leif and Gille came there also, with many in their following. After they had set up their tents, and put themselves in order, they went to Karl Morske, and saluted each other on both sides in a friendly way. Then Karl produced King Olaf's words, tokens, and friendly message to Leif and Gille, who received them in a friendly manner, invited Karl to come to them, and promised him to support his errand, and give him all the aid in their power, for which he thanked them. Soon after came Thrand of Gata, who also received Karl in the most friendly manner, and said he was glad to see so able a man coming to their country on the king's business, which they were all bound to promote. "I will insist, Karl," says he, "on thy taking up thy winter abode with me, together with all those of thy people who may appear to thee necessary for thy dignity."

Karl replies, that he had already settled to lodge with

Leif; "otherwise I would with great pleasure have accepted thy invitation."

"Then fate has given great honour to Leif," says Thrand; "but is there any other way in which I can be of service?"

Karl replies, that he would do him a great service by collecting the scat of the eastern island, and of all the northern islands.

Thrand said it was both his duty and interest to assist in the king's business, and thereupon Thrand returned to his tent; and at that Thing nothing else worth speaking of occurred. Karl took up his abode with Leif Ossurson, and was there all winter (1028). Leif collected the scat of Straumey Island, and all the islands south of it. The spring after Thrand of Gata fell ill, and had sore eyes and other complaints; but he prepared to attend the Thing, as was his custom. When he came to the Thing he had his tent put up, and within it another black tent, that the light might not penetrate. After some days of the Thing had passed, Leif and Karl came to Thrand's tent, with a great many people, and found some persons standing outside. They asked if Thrand was in the tent, and were told he was. Leif told them to bid Thrand come out, as he and Karl had some business with him. They came back, and said that Thrand had sore eyes, and could not come out; "but he begs thee, Leif, to come to him within." Leif told his comrades to come carefully into the tent, and not to press forward, and that he who came last in should go out first. Leif went in first, followed by Karl, and then his comrades; and all fully armed as if

they were going into battle. Leif went into the black tent and asked if Thrand was there. Thrand answered, and saluted Leif. Leif returned his salutation, and asked if he had brought the scat from the northern islands, and if he would pay the scat that had been collected. Thrand replies, that he had not forgotten what had been spoken of between him and Karl, and that he would now pay over the scat. "Here is a purse, Leif, full of silver, which thou canst receive." Leif looked around, and saw but few people in the tent, of whom some were lying upon the benches, and a few were sitting up. Then Leif went to Thrand, and took the purse, and carried it into the outer tent, where it was light, turned out the money on his shield, groped about in it with his hand, and told Karl to look at the silver. When they had looked at it a while, Karl asked Leif what he thought of the silver. He replied, "I am thinking where the bad money that is in the north isles can have come from." Thrand heard this, and said, "Do you not think, Leif, the silver is good?" "No," says he. Thrand replies, "Our relations, then, are rascals not to be trusted. I sent them in spring to collect the scat in the north isles, as I could not myself go anywhere, and they have allowed themselves to be bribed by the bondes to take false money, which nobody looks upon as current and good; it is better, therefore, Leif, to look at this silver which has been paid me as land-rent." Leif thereupon carried back this silver, and received another bag, which he carried to Karl, and they looked over the money together. Karl asked Leif what he thought of this money. He answered, that it appeared to him so

bad that it would not be taken in payment, however little hope there might be of getting a debt paid in any other way: "therefore I will not take this money upon the king's account." A man who had been lying on the bench now cast the skin coverlet off which he had drawn over his head, and said, "True is the old word,—he grows worse who grows older: so it is with thee, Thrand, who allowest Karl Morske to handle thy money all the day." This was Gaut the Red. Thrand sprang up at Gaut's words, and reprimanded his relation with many angry words. At last he said that Leif should leave this silver, and take a bag which his own peasants had brought him in spring. "And although I am weak-sighted, yet my own hand is the truest test." Another man who was lying on the bench raised himself now upon his elbow; and this was Thord the Low. He said, "These are no ordinary reproaches we suffer from Karl Morske, and therefore he well deserves a reward for them." Leif in the meantime took the bag, and carried it to Karl; and when they cast their eyes on the money, Leif said, "We need not look long at this silver, for here the one piece of money is better than the other; and this is the money we will have. Let a man come to be present at the counting it out." Thrand says that he thought Leif was the fittest man to do it upon his account. Leif and Karl thereupon went a short way from the tent, sat down, and counted and weighed the silver. Karl took the helmet off his head, and received in it the weighed silver. They saw a man coming to them who had a stick with an axe-head on it in his hand, a hat low upon his head, and a short

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green cloak. He was bare-legged, and had linen breeches on tied at the knee. He laid his stick down in the field, and went to Karl and said, "Take care, Karl Morske, that thou does not hurt thyself against my axe-stick." Immediately a man came running and calls with great haste to Leif Ossurson, telling him to come as quickly as possible to Lagman Gille's tent; "for," says he, "Sigurd Thorlakson ran in just now into the mouth of the tent, and gave one of Gille's men a desperate wound." Leif rose up instantly, and went off to Gille's tent along with his men. Karl remained sitting, and the Norway people stood around in all corners. Gaut immediately sprang up, and struck with a hand-axe over the heads of the people, and the stroke came on Karl's head; but the wound was slight. Thord the Low seized the stick-axe, which lay in the field at his side, and struck the axe-blade right into Karl's skull. Many people now streamed out of Thrand's tent. Karl was carried away dead. Thrand was much grieved at this event, and offered money-mulcts for his relations; but Leif and Gille, who had to prosecute the business, would accept no mulct. Sigurd was banished the country for having wounded Gille's tent comrade, and Gaut and Thord for the murder of Karl. The Norway people rigged out the vessel which Karl had with him, and sailed eastward to Olaf, and gave him these tidings. He was in no pleasant humour at it, and threatened a speedy vengeance; but it was not allotted by fate to King Olaf to revenge himself on Thrand and his relations, because of the hostilities which had begun in Norway, and which are now to be related. And there is nothing more to be told

of what happened after King Olaf sent men to the Farey Islands to take scat of them. But great strife arose after Karl's death in the Farey Islands between the family of Thrand of Gata and Leif Ossurson, and of which there are great sagas.

154.—KING OLAF'S EXPEDITION WITH HIS LEVY.

Now we must proceed with the relation we began before,—that King Olaf set out with his men, and raised a levy over the whole country (1027). All lendermen in the North followed him excepting Einar Tambaskelfer, who sat quietly at home upon his farm since his return to the country, and did not serve the king. Einar had great estates and wealth, although he held no fiefs from the king, and he lived splendidly. King Olaf sailed with his fleet south around Stad, and many people from the districts around joined him. King Olaf himself had a ship which he had got built the winter before (1027), and which was called the Visund.[1] It was a very large ship, with a bison's head gilded all over upon the bow.

Sigvat the skald speaks thus of it:—

"Trygvason's Long Serpent bore,
Grim gaping o'er the waves before,
A dragon's head with open throat,
When last the hero was afloat:
His cruise was closed,
As God disposed.
Olaf has raised a bison's head,
Which proudly seems the waves to tread,
While o'er its golden forehead dashing
The waves its glittering horns are washing:
May God dispose
A luckier close."

The king went on to Hordaland; there he heard the news that Erling Skjalgson had left the country with a great force, and four or five ships. He himself had a

[1]Visundr is the buffalo; although the modern bison, or American animal of that name, might have been known through the Greenland colonists, who in this reign had visited some parts of America.—L.

large war-ship, and his sons had three of twenty rowing-banks each; and they had sailed westward to England to Canute the Great. Then King Olaf sailed eastward along the land with a mighty war-force, and he inquired everywhere if anything was known of Canute's proceedings; and all agreed in saying he was in England but added that he was fitting out a levy, and intended coming to Norway. As Olaf had a large fleet, and could not discover with certainty where he should go to meet King Canute, and as his people were dissatisfied with lying quiet in one place with so large an armament, he resolved to sail with his fleet south to Denmark, and took with him all the men who were best appointed and most warlike; and he gave leave to the others to return home.

Now the people whom he thought of little use having gone home, King Olaf had many excellent and stout men-at-arms besides those who, as before related, had fled the country, or sat quietly at home; and most of the chief men and lendermen of Norway were along with him.

155.—OF KING OLAF AND KING ONUND.

When King Olaf sailed to Denmark, he set his course for Seeland; and when he came there he made incursions on the land, and began to plunder. The country people were severely treated; some were killed, some bound and dragged to the ships. All who could do so took to flight, and made no opposition. King Olaf committed there the greatest ravages. While Olaf was in Seeland, the news came that King Onund Olafson of Sweden had raised a levy, and fallen upon Scania, and was ravaging there;

and then it became known what the resolution had been that the two kings had taken at the Gaut river, where they had concluded a union and friendship, and had bound themselves to oppose King Canute. King Onund continued his march until he met his brother-in-law King Olaf. When they met they made proclamation both to their own people and to the people of the country, that they intended to conquer Denmark; and asked the support of the people of the country for this purpose. And it happened, as we find examples of everywhere, that if hostilities are brought upon the people of a country not strong enough to withstand, the greatest number will submit to the conditions by which peace can be purchased at any rate. So it happened here that many men went into the service of the kings, and agreed to submit to them. Wheresoever they went they laid the country all round in subjection to them, and otherwise laid waste all with fire and sword.

Of this foray Sigvat the skald speaks, in a ballad he composed concerning King Canute the Great:—

"'Canute is on the sea!'
The news is told,
And the Norsemen bold
Repeat it with great glee.
And it runs from mouth to mouth—
'On a lucky day
We came away
From Throndhjem to the south.'
Across the cold East sea,
The Swedish king
His host did bring,
To gain great victory.

King Onund came to fight,
In Seeland's plains,
Against the Danes,
With his steel-clad men so bright.
Canute is on the land;
Side to side
His long-ships ride
Along the yellow strand.
Where waves wash the green banks,
Mast to mast,
All bound fast,
His great fleet lies in ranks."

156—OF KING CANUTE THE GREAT.

King Canute had heard in England that King Olaf of Norway had called out a levy, and had gone with his

forces to Denmark, and was making great ravages in his dominions there. Canute began to gather people, and he had speedily collected a great army and a numerous fleet. Earl Hakon was second in command over the whole.

Sigvat the skald came this summer (1027) from the West, from Ruda (Rouen) in Valland, and with him was a man called Berg. They had made a merchant voyage there the summer before. Sigvat had made a little poem about this journey, called "The Western Traveller's Song," which begins thus:—

"Berg! many a merry morn was pass'd,
When our vessel was made fast,
And we lay on the glittering tide
Of Rouen river's western side."

When Sigvat came to England he went directly to King Canute, and asked his leave to proceed to Norway; for King Canute had forbidden all merchant vessels to sail until he himself was ready with his fleet. When Sigvat arrived he went to the house in which the king was lodged; but the doors were locked, and he had to stand a long time outside, but when he got admittance he obtained the permission he desired. He then sang:—

"The way to Jutland's king I sought;
A little patience I was taught.
The doors were shut—all full within;
The udaller could not get in.
But Gorm's great son did condescend
To his own chamber me to send,
And grant my prayer—although I'm one
Whose arms the fetters' weight have known."

When Sigvat became aware that King Canute was equipping an armament against King Olaf, and knew what a mighty force King Canute had, he made these lines:—

"The mighty Canute, and Earl Hakon,
Have leagued themselves, and counsel taken
Against King Olaf's life,
And are ready for the strife.
In spite of king and earl, I say,
'I love him well—may he get away:'
On the Fielde, wild and dreary,
With him I'd live, and ne'er be weary."

Sigvat made many other songs concerning this expedition of Canute and Hakon. He made this among others:—

"'Twas not the earl's intention then
'Twixt Olaf and the udalmen
Peace to establish, and the land
Upright to hold with Northman's hand;
But ever with deceit and lies
Eirik's descendant, Hakon, tries
To make ill-will and discontent,
Till all the udalmen are bent
Against King Olaf's rule to rise."

157.—OF KING CANUTE'S SHIP THE DRAGON.

Canute the Great was at last ready with his fleet, and left the land; and a vast number of men he had, and ships frightfully large. He himself had a dragon-ship, so large that it had sixty banks of rowers, and the head was gilt all over. Earl Hakon had another dragon of forty banks, and it also had a gilt figure-head. The sails of both were in stripes of blue, red, and green, and the vessels were painted all above the water-stroke; and all that belonged to their equipment was most splendid. They had also many other huge ships remarkably well fitted out, and grand. Sigvat the skald talks of this in his song on Canute:—

"Canute is out beneath the sky—
Canute of the clear blue eye!
The king is out on the ocean's breast,
Leading his grand fleet from the West.
On to the East the ship-masts glide,
Glancing and bright each long-ship's side.
The conqueror of great Ethelred,
Canute, is there, his foemen's dread:
His dragon with her sails of blue,
All bright and brilliant to the view,
High hoisted on the yard arms wide,
Carries great Canute o'er the tide.
Brave is the royal progress—fast
The proud ship's keel obeys the mast,
Dashes through foam, and gains the land,
Raising a surge on Limfjord's strand."

It is related that King Canute sailed with this vast force from England, and came with all his force safely to Denmark, where he went into Limfjord, and there he found gathered besides a large army of the men of the country.

158.—HARDAKNUT TAKEN TO BE KING IN DENMARK.

Earl Ulf Sprakalegson had been set as protector over Denmark when King Canute went to England, and the king had intrusted his son Hardaknut in the earl's hands. This took place the summer before (1026), as we related. But the earl immediately gave it out that King Canute had, at parting, made known to him his will and desire that the Danes should take his son Hardaknut as king over the Danish dominions. "On that account," says the earl, "he gave the matter into our hands; as I, and many other chiefs and leading men here in the country, have often complained to King Canute of the evil consequences to the country of being without a king, and that former kings thought it honour and power enough to rule over the Danish kingdom alone; and in the times that are past many kings have ruled over this kingdom. But now there are greater difficulties than have ever been before; for we have been so fortunate hitherto as to live without disturbance from foreign kings, but now we hear the king of Norway is going to attack us, to which is added the fear of the people that the Swedish king will join him; and now King Canute is in England." The earl then produced King Canute's letter and seal, confirming all that the earl asserted. Many other chiefs supported this business; and in consequence of all these persuasions the people resolved to take Hardaknut as king, which was done at the same Thing. The Queen Emma had been principal promoter of this determination; for she had got the letter to be written, and provided with the seal, having cunningly got hold of the king's signet; but from him it

was all concealed. Now when Hardaknut and Earl Ulf heard for certain that King Olaf was come from Norway with a large army, they went to Jutland, where the greatest strength of the Danish kingdom lies, sent out message-tokens, and summoned to them a great force; but when they heard the Swedish king was also come with his army, they thought they would not have strength enough to give battle to both, and therefore kept their army together in Jutland, and resolved to defend that country against the kings. The whole of their ships they assembled in Limfjord, and waited thus for King Canute. Now when they heard that King Canute had come from the West to Limfjord they sent men to him, and to Queen Emma, and begged her to find out if the king was angry at them or not, and to let them know. The queen talked over the matter with him, and said, "Your son Hardaknut will pay the full mulct the king may demand, if he has done anything which is thought to be against the king." He replies, that Hardaknut has not done this of his own judgment. "And therefore," says he, "it has turned out as might have been expected, that when he, a child, and without understanding, wanted to be called king, the country, when any evil came and an enemy appeared, must be conquered by foreign princes, if our might had not come to his aid. If he will have any reconciliation with me let him come to me, and lay down the mock title of king he has given himself." The queen sent these very words to Hardaknut, and at the same time she begged him not to decline coming; for, as she truly observed, he had no force to stand against his father. When this message came to

Hardaknut he asked the advice of the earl and other chief people who were with him; but it was soon found that when the people heard King Canute the Old was arrived they all streamed to him, and seemed to have no confidence but in him alone. Then Earl Ulf and his fellows saw they had but two roads to take; either to go to the king and leave all to his mercy, or to fly the country. All pressed Hardaknut to go to his father, which advice he followed. When they met he fell at his father's feet, and laid his seal, which accompanied the kingly title, on his knee. King Canute took Hardaknut by the hand, and placed him in as high a seat as he used to sit in before. Earl Ulf sent his son Svein, who was a sister's son of King Canute, and the same age as Hardaknut, to the king. He prayed for grace and reconciliation for his father, and offered himself as hostage for the earl. King Canute ordered him to tell the earl to assemble his men and ships, and come to him, and then they would talk of reconciliation. The earl did so.

159.—FORAY IN SCANIA.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute was come from the West, and also that he had a vast force, they sailed east to Scania, and allowed themselves to ravage and burn in the districts there, and then proceeded eastward along the land to the frontier of Sweden. As soon as the country people heard that King Canute was come from the West, no one thought of going into the service of the two kings.

Now the kings sailed eastward along the coast, and

brought up in a river called Helga, and remained there some time. When they heard that King Canute was coming eastward with his forces against them, they held a council; and the result was, that King Olaf with his people went up the country to the forest, and to the lake out of which the river Helga flows. There at the river-head they made a dam of timber and turf, and dammed in the lake. They also dug a deep ditch, through which they led several waters, so that the lake waxed very high. In the river-bed they laid large logs of timber. They were many days about this work, and King Olaf had the management of this piece of artifice; but King Onund had only to command the fleet and army. When King Canute heard of the proceedings of the two kings, and of the damage they had done to his dominions, he sailed right against them to where they lay in Helga river. He had a war-force which was one half greater than that of both the kings together. Sigvat speaks of these things:—

"The king, who shields
His Jutland fields
From scaith or harm
By foeman's arm,
Will not allow
Wild plundering now:
'The greatest he,
On land or sea.'"

160.—BATTLE IN HELGA RIVER.

One day, towards evening, King Onund's spies saw King Canute coming sailing along, and he was not far off. Then King Onund ordered the war-horns to sound; on which his people struck their tents, put on their weapons, rowed out of the harbour and east round the land, bound their ships together, and prepared for battle. King Onund made his spies run up the country to look for King

Olaf, and tell him the news. Then King Olaf broke up the dam, and let the river take its course. King Olaf travelled down in the night to his ships. When King Canute came outside the harbour, he saw the forces of the kings ready for battle. He thought that it would be too late in the day to begin the fight by the time his forces could be ready; for his fleet required a great deal of room at sea, and there was a long distance between the foremost of his ships and the hindmost, and between those outside and those nearest the land, and there was but little wind. Now, as Canute saw that the Swedes and Norwegians had quitted the harbour, he went into it with as many ships as it could hold; but the main strength of the fleet lay without the harbour. In the morning, when it was light, a great part of the men went on shore; some for amusement, some to converse with the people of other ships. They observed nothing until the water came rushing over them like a waterfall, carrying huge trees, which drove in among their ships, damaging all they struck; and the water covered all the fields. The men on shore perished, and many who were in the ships. All who could do it cut their cables; so that the ships were loose, and drove before the stream, and were scattered here and there. The great dragon, which King Canute himself was in, drove before the stream; and as it could not so easily be turned with oars, drove out among Olaf's and Onund's ships. As they knew the ship, they laid her on board on all quarters. But the ship was so high in the hull, as if it were a castle, and had besides such a numerous and chosen crew on board, well armed and exercised,

that it was not easy to attack her. After a short time also Earl Ulf came up with his fleet; and then the battle began, and King Canute's fleet gathered together from all quarters. But the kings Olaf and Onund, seeing they had for this time got all the victory that fate permitted them to gain, let their ships retreat, cast themselves loose from King Canute's ship, and the fleets separated. But as the attack had not been made as King Canute had determined, he made no further attempt; and the kings on each side arranged their fleets and put their ships in order. When the fleets were parted, and each sailing its course, Olaf and Onund looked over their forces, and found they had suffered no loss of men. In the meantime they saw that if they waited until King Canute got his large fleet in order to attack them, the difference of force was so great that for them there was little chance of victory. It was also evident that if the battle was renewed, they must suffer a great loss of men. They took the resolution, therefore, to row with the whole fleet eastward along the coast. Observing that King Canute did not pursue them, they raised up their masts and set sail. Ottar Svarte tells thus of it in the poem he composed upon King Canute the Great:—

"The king, in battle fray,
Drove the Swedish host away:
The wolf did not miss prey,
Nor the raven on that day.

Great Canute might deride
Two kings if he had pride,
For at Helga river's side
They would not his sword abide."

Thord Sjarekson also sang these lines in his death song of King Olaf:—

"King Olaf, Agder's lord,
Ne'er shunned the Jutland king,
But with his blue-edged sword
Broke many a panzer ring.

King Canute was not slow:
King Onund filled the plain
With dead, killed by his bow:
The wolf howled o'er the slain."

161.—KING OLAF AND KING ONUND'S PLANS.

King Olaf and King Onund sailed eastward to the Swedish king's dominions; and one day, towards evening, landed at a place called Barvik, where they lay all night. But then it was observed of the Swedes that they were home-sick; for the greater part of their forces sailed eastward along the land in the night, and did not stop their course until they came home to their houses. Now when King Onund observed this he ordered, as soon as the day dawned, to sound the signal for a House-thing; and the whole people went on shore, and the Thing sat down. Then King Onund took up the word, and spake thus: "So it is, King Olaf, that, as you know, we have been assembled in summer, and have forayed wide around in Denmark, and have gained much booty, but no land. I had 350 vessels, and now have not above 100 remaining with me. Now it appears to me we can make no greater progress than we have made, although you have still the 60 vessels which have followed you the whole summer. It therefore appears to me best that we come back to my kingdom; for it is always good to drive home with the waggon safe. In this expedition we have won something, and lost nothing. Now I will offer you, King Olaf, to come with me, and we shall remain assembled during the winter. Take as much of my kingdom as you will, so that you and the men who follow you may support yourselves well; and when spring comes let us take such measures as we find serviceable. If you, however, will prefer to travel across our country, and go overland to Norway, it shall be free for you to do so."

King Olaf thanked King Onund for his friendly offer. "But if I may advise," says he, "then we should take another resolution, and keep together the forces we have still remaining. I had in the first of summer, before I left Norway, 350 ships; but when I left the country I chose from among the whole war-levy those I thought to be the best, and with them I manned 60 ships; and these I still have. Now it appears to me that the part of your war-force which has now run away is the most worthless, and of least resistance; but now I see here all your chiefs and leaders, and I know well that the people who belong to the court-troops[1] are by far the best suited to carry arms. We have here chosen men and superb ships, and we can very well lie all winter in our ships, as viking's custom is. But Canute cannot lie long in Helga river; for the harbour will not hold so many vessels as he has. If he steers eastward after us, we can escape from him, and then people will soon gather to us; but if he return to the harbours where his fleet can lie, I know for certain that the desire to return home will not be less in his army than in ours. I think, also, we have ravaged so widely in summer, that the villagers, both in Scania and in Halland, know well whose favour they have to seek. Canute's army will thus be dispersed so widely, that it is uncertain to whom fate may at the last give the victory; but let us first find out what resolution he takes."

Thus King Olaf ended his speech, and it found much applause, and his advice was followed. Spies were sent into King Canute's army, and both the kings Olaf and Onund remained lying where they were.

[1]The thingmen, or hired body-guard attending the court.—L.

162.—OF KING CANUTE AND EARL ULF.

When King Canute saw that the kings of Norway and Sweden steered eastward with their forces along the coast, he sent men to ride night and day on the land to follow their movements. Some spies went forward, others returned; so that King Canute had news every day of their progress. He had also spies always in their army. Now when he heard that a great part of the fleet had sailed away from the kings, he turned back with his forces to Seeland, and lay with his whole fleet in the Sound; so that a part lay on the Scania side, and a part on the Seeland side. King Canute himself, the day before Michælmas, rode with a great retinue to Roeskilde. There his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, had prepared a great feast for him. The earl was the most agreeable host; but the king was silent and sullen. The earl talked to him in every way to make him cheerful, and brought forward everything which he thought would amuse him; but the king remained stern, and speaking little. At last the earl proposed to him a game at chess, which he agreed to; and a chess-board was produced, and they played together. Earl Ulf was hasty in temper, stiff, and in nothing yielding; but everything he managed went on well in his hands; and he was a great warrior, about whom there are many stories. He was the most powerful man in Denmark next to the king. Earl Ulf's sister Gyda was married to Earl Gudin (Godwin) Ulfnadson; and their sons were Harald king of England, and Earl Toste, Earl Valthiof, Earl Morukare, and Earl Svein. Gyda was the name of their daughter, who was married to the English king Edward the Good.

163.—OF THE EARL'S MURDER.

When they had played a while the king made a false move, at which the earl took a knight from the king; but the king set the piece again upon the board, and told the earl to make another move; but the earl grew angry, threw over the chess-board, stood up, and went away. The king said, "Runnest thou away, Ulf the coward?" The earl turned round at the door and said, "Thou wouldst have run farther at Helga river, if thou hadst come to battle there. Thou didst not call me Ulf the coward, when I hastened to thy help while the Swedes were beating thee like a dog." The earl then went out, and went to bed. A little later the king also went to bed. The following morning while the king was putting on his clothes he said to his footboy, "Go thou to Earl Ulf, and kill him."

The lad went, was away a while, and then came back.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I did not kill him, for he was gone to Saint Lucius' church."

There was a man called Ivar White, a Norwegian by birth, who was the king's courtman and chamberlain. The king said to him, "Go thou and kill the earl."

Ivar went to the church, and in at the choir, and thrust his sword through the earl, who died on the spot. Then Ivar went to the king, with the bloody sword in his hand.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I have killed him," says he.

"Thou didst well."

After the earl was killed the monks closed the church,

and locked the doors. When that was told the king he sent a message to the monks, ordering them to open the church and sing high mass. They did as the king ordered; and when the king came to the church he bestowed on it great property, so that it had a large domain, by which that place was raised very high; and these lands have since always belonged to it. King Canute rode down to his ships, and lay there till late in harvest with a very large army.

164.—OF KING OLAF AND THE SWEDES.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute had sailed to the Sound, and lay there with a great force, the kings held a House-thing, and spoke much about what resolution they should adopt. King Olaf wished they should remain there with all the fleet, and see what King Canute would at last resolve to do. But the Swedes held it to be unadvisable to remain until the frost set in, and so it was determined; and King Onund went home with all his army, and King Olaf remained lying after them.

165.—OF EGIL AND TOFE.

While King Olaf lay there, he had frequently conferences and consultations with his people. One night Egil Halson and Tofe Valgautson had the watch upon the king's ship. Tofe came from West Gautland, and was a man of high birth. While they sat on watch they heard much lamentation and crying among the people who had been taken in the war, and who lay bound on the shore at night. Tofe said it made him ill to hear such

distress, and asked Egil to go with him, and let loose these people. This work they set about, cut the cords, and let the people escape, and they looked upon it as a piece of great friendship; but the king was so enraged at it, that they themselves were in the greatest danger. When Egil afterwards fell sick the king for a long time would not visit him, until many people entreated it of him. It vexed Egil much to have done anything the king was angry at, and he begged his forgiveness. The king now dismissed his wrath against Egil, laid his hands upon the side on which Egil's pain was, and sang a prayer; upon which the pain ceased instantly, and Egil grew better. Tofe came, after entreaty, into reconciliation with the king, on condition that he should exhort his father Valgaut to come to the king. He was a heathen; but after conversation with the king he went over to Christianity, and died instantly when he was baptized.

166.—TREACHERY TOWARDS KING OLAF.

King Olaf had now frequent conferences with his people, and asked advice from them, and from his chiefs, as to what he should determine upon. But there was no unanimity among them—some considering that unadvisable which others considered highly serviceable; and there was much indecision in their councils. King Canute had always spies in King Olaf's army, who entered into conversation with many of his men, offering them presents and favour on account of King Canute. Many allowed themselves to be seduced, and gave prom-

ises of fidelity, and to be King Canute's men, and bring the country into his hands if he came to Norway. This was apparent, afterwards, of many who at first kept it concealed. Some took at once money bribes, and others were promised money afterwards; and a great many there were who had got great presents of money from him before: for it may be said with truth of King Canute, that every man who came to him, and who he thought had the spirit of a man and would like his favour, got his hands full of gifts and money. On this account he was very popular, although his generosity was principally shown to foreigners, and was greatest the greater distance they came from.

167.—KING OLAF'S CONSULTATIONS.

King Olaf had often conferences and meetings with his people, and asked their counsel; but as he observed they gave different opinions, he had a suspicion that there must be some who spoke differently from what they really thought advisable for him, and he was thus uncertain if all gave him due fidelity in council. Some pressed that with the first fair wind they should sail to the Sound, and so to Norway. They said the Danes would not dare to attack them, although they lay with so great a force right in the way. But the king was a man of too much understanding not to see that this was impracticable. He knew also that Olaf Trygvason had found it quite otherwise, as to the Danes not daring to fight, when he with a few people went into battle against a great body of them. The king also knew that in King Canute's

army there were a great many Norwegians; therefore he entertained the suspicion that those who gave this advice were more favourable to King Canute than to him. King Olaf came at last to the determination, from all these considerations, that the people who would follow him should make themselves ready to proceed by land across Gautland, and so to Norway. "But our ships," said he, "and all things that we cannot take with us, I will send eastward to the Swedish king's dominions, and let them be taken care of for us there."

168.—HAREK OF THJOTTA'S VOYAGE.

Harek of Thjotta replied thus to the king's speech: "It is evident that I cannot travel on foot to Norway. I am old and heavy, and little accustomed to walking. Besides, I am unwilling to part with my ship; for on that ship and its apparel I have bestowed so much labour, that it would go much against my inclination to put her into the hands of my enemies."

The king said, "Come along with us, Harek, and we shall carry thee when thou art tired of walking." Then Harek sang these lines:—

"I'll mount my ocean steed,
And o'er the sea I'll speed;
Forests and hills are not for me,—
I love the moving sea,
Though Canute block the Sound,
Rather than walk the ground,
And leave my ship, I'll see
What my ship will do for me."

Then King Olaf let everything be put in order for the journey. The people had their walking clothing and weapons, but their other clothes and effects they packed upon such horses as they could get. Then he sent off people to take his ships east to Calmar. There he had

the vessels laid up, and the ships' apparel and other goods taken care of. Harek did as he had said, and waited for a wind, and then sailed west to Scania, until, about the decline of the day, he came with a fresh and fair wind to the eastward of Holar. There he let the sail and the vane, and flag and mast be taken down, and let the upper works of the ship be covered over with some grey tilt-canvas, and let a few men sit at the oars in the fore part and aft, but the most were sitting low down in the vessel.

When Canute's watchmen saw the ship, they talked with each other about what ship it might be, and made the guess that it must be one loaded with herrings or salt, as they only saw a few men at the oars; and the ship, besides, appeared to them grey, and wanting tar, as if burnt up by the sun, and they saw also that it was deeply loaded. Now when Harek came farther through the Sound, and past the fleet, he raised the mast, hoisted sail, and set up his gilded vane. The sail was white as snow, and in it were red and blue stripes of cloth interwoven. When the king's men saw the ship sailing in this state, they told the king that probably King Olaf had sailed through them. But King Canute replies, that King Olaf was too prudent a man to sail with a single ship through King Canute's fleet, and thought it more likely to be Harek of Thjotta, or the like of him. Many believed the truth to be that King Canute knew of this expedition of Harek, and that it would not have succeeded so if they had not concluded a friendship beforehand with each other; which seemed likely, after King Canute's and Harek's friendly understanding became generally known.

Harek made this song as he sailed northward round the isle of Vedrey:—

"The widows of Lund may smile through their tears,
The Danish girls may have their jeers;
They may laugh or smile,
But outside their isle
Old Harek still on to his North land steers."

Harek went on his way, and never stopped till he came north to Halogaland, to his own house in Thjotta.

169.—KING OLAF'S COURSE FROM SVITHJOD.

When King Olaf began his journey, he came first into Smaland, and then into West Gautland. He marched quietly and peaceably, and the country people gave him all assistance on his journey. Thus he proceeded until he came into Viken, and north through Viken to Sarpsborg, where he remained, and ordered a winter abode to be prepared (1028). Then he gave most of the chiefs leave to return home, but kept the lendermen by him whom he thought the most serviceable. There were with him also all the sons of Arne Arnmodson, and they stood in great favour with the king. Geller Thorkelson, who the summer before had come from Iceland, also came there to the king, as before related.

170.—OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

Sigvat the skald had long been in King Olaf's household, as before related, and the king made him his marshal. Sigvat had no talent for speaking in prose; but in skaldcraft he was so practised, that the verses came as readily from his tongue as if he were speaking in usual language. He had made a mercantile journey to Nor-

mandy, and in the course of it had come to England, where he met King Canute, and obtained permission from him to sail to Norway, as before related. When he came to Norway he proceeded straight to King Olaf, and found him at Sarpsborg. He presented himself before the king just as he was sitting down to table. Sigvat saluted him. The king looked at Sigvat and was silent. Then Sigvat sang:—

"Great king! thy marshal is come home,
No more by land or sea to roam,
But by thy side
Still to abide.
Great king! what seat here shall he take
For the king's honour—not his sake?
For all seats here
To me are dear."

Then was verified the old saying, that "many are the ears of a king;" for King Olaf had heard all about Sigvat's journey, and that he had spoken with Canute. He says to Sigvat, "I do not know if thou art my marshal, or hast become one of Canute's men." Sigvat said:—

"Canute, whose golden gifts display
A generous heart, would have me stay,
Service in his great court to take,
And my own Norway king forsake.
Two masters at a time, I said,
Were one too many for men bred
Where truth and virtue, shown to all,
Make all men true in Olaf's hall."

Then King Olaf told Sigvat to take his seat where he before used to sit; and in a short time Sigvat was in as high favour with the king as ever.

171.—OF ERLING SKJALGSON AND HIS SONS.

Erling Skjalgson and all his sons had been all summer in King Canute's army, in the retinue of Earl Hakon. Thorer Hund was also there, and was in high esteem. Now when King Canute heard that King Olaf had gone overland to Norway, he discharged his army, and gave all men leave to go to their winter abodes. There was

then in Denmark a great army of foreigners, both English, Norwegians, and men of other countries, who had joined the expedition in summer. In autumn (1027) Erling Skjalgson went to Norway with his men, and received great presents from King Canute at parting; but Thorer Hund remained behind in King Canute's court. With Erling went messengers from King Canute well provided with money; and in winter they travelled through all the country, paying the money which King Canute had promised to many in autumn for their assistance. They gave presents in money, besides, to many whose friendship could be purchased for King Canute. They received much assistance in their travels from Erling. In this way it came to pass that many turned their support to King Canute, promised him their services, and agreed to oppose King Olaf. Some did this openly, but many more concealed it from the public. King Olaf heard this news, for many had something to tell him about it; and the conversation in the court often turned upon it. Sigvat the skald made a song upon it:—

"The base traitors ply
With purses of gold,
Wanting to buy
What is not to be sold,—
The king's life and throne
Wanting to buy:
But our souls are our own,
And to hell we'll not hie.
No pleasure in heaven,
As we know full well,
To the traitor is given,—
His soul is his hell."

Often also the conversation turned upon how ill it beseemed Earl Hakon to raise his hand in arms against King Olaf, who had given him his life when he fell into the king's power; but Sigvat was a particular friend of Earl Hakon, and when he heard the earl spoken against he sang:—

"Our own court people we may
blame,
If they take gold to their own
shame,
Their king and country to betray.
With those who give it's not the
same,
From them we have no faith to
claim:
'Tis we are wrong, if we give way."

172.—OF KING OLAF'S PRESENTS AT YULE.

King Olaf gave a great feast at Yule, and many great people had come to him. It was the seventh day of Yule, that the king, with a few persons, among whom was Sigvat, who attended him day and night, went to a house in which the king's most precious valuables were kept. He had, according to his custom, collected there with great care the valuable presents he was to make on New Year's eve. There was in the house no small number of gold-mounted swords; and Sigvat sang:—

"The swords stand there,
All bright and fair,—
Those oars that dip in blood:
If I in favour stood,
I too might have a share.
A sword the skald would gladly take,
And use it for his master's sake:
In favour once he stood,
And a sword has stained in blood."

The king took a sword of which the handle was twisted round with gold, and the guard was gold-mounted, and gave it to him. It was a valuable article; but the gift was not seen without envy, as will appear hereafter.

Immediately after Yule (1028) the king began his journey to the Uplands; for he had a great many people about him, but had received no income that autumn from the North country, for there had been an armament in summer, and the king had laid out all the revenues he could command; and also he had no vessels with which he and his people could go to the North. At the same time he had news from the North, from which he could

see that there would be no safety for him in that quarter, unless he went with a great force. For these reasons he determined to proceed through the Uplands, although it was not so long a time since he had been there in guest-quarters as the law prescribes, and as the kings usually had the custom of observing in their visits. When he came to the Uplands the lendermen and the richest bondes invited him to be their guest, and thus lightened his expenses.

173.—OF BJORN THE BAILIFF.

There was a man called Bjorn who was of Gautland family, and a friend and acquaintance of Queen Astrid, and in some way related to her. She had given him farm-management and other offices in the upper part of Hedemark. He had also the management of Osterdal district. Bjorn was not in esteem with the king, nor liked by the bondes. It happened in a hamlet which Bjorn ruled over, that many swine and cattle were missing; therefore Bjorn ordered a Thing to be called to examine the matter. Such pillage he attributed chiefly to the people settled in forest-farms far from other men; by which he referred particularly to those who dwelt in Osterdal, for that district was very thinly inhabited, and full of lakes and forest-cleanings, and but in few places was any great neighbourhood together.

174.—OF RAUD'S SONS.

There was a man called Raud who dwelt in Osterdal. His wife was called Ragnhild; and his sons, Dag and

Sigurd, were men of great talent. They were present at the Thing, made a reply in defence of the Osterdal people, and removed the accusation from them. Bjorn thought they were too pert in their answer, and too fine in their clothes and weapons; and therefore turned his speech against these brothers, and said it was not unlikely they may have committed these thefts. They denied it, and the Thing closed. Soon after King Olaf, with his retinue, came to guest-quarters in the house of bailiff Bjorn. The matter which had been before the Thing was then complained of to the king; and Bjorn said that Raud's sons appeared to him to have committed these thefts. A messenger was sent for Raud's sons; and when they appeared before the king he said they had not at all the appearance of thieves, and acquitted them. Thereupon they invited the king, with all his retinue, to a three days' entertainment at their father's; and although Bjorn dissuaded him from it, the king went. At Raud's there was a very excellent feast. The king asked Raud what people he and his wife were. Raud answered that he was originally a Swedish man, rich and of high birth; "but I ran away with the wife I have ever since had, and she is a sister of King Hring Dagson." The king then remembered both their families. He found that father and sons were men of understanding, and asked them what they could do. Sigurd said he could interpret dreams, and determine the time of the day although no heavenly bodies could be seen. The king made trial of his art, and found it was as Sigurd had said. Dag stated, as his accomplishment, that he could see the misdeeds and vices of

every man who came under his eye, when he chose to observe him closely. The king told him to declare what faults of disposition he saw in the king himself. Dag mentioned a fault which the king was sensible he really had. Then the king asked what fault the bailiff Bjorn had. Dag said Bjorn was a thief; and told also where Bjorn had concealed on his farm the bones, horns, and hides of the cattle he had stolen in autumn; "for he committed," said Dag, "all the thefts in autumn which he accuses other people of." Dag also told the king the places where the king should go after leaving them. When the king departed from Raud's house he was accompanied on the way, and presented with friendly gifts; and Raud's sons remained with the king. The king went first to Bjorn's, and found there that all Dag had told him was true. Upon which he drove Bjorn out of the country; and he had to thank the queen that he preserved life and limbs.

175.—THORER'S DEATH.

Thorer, a son of Olver of Eggja, a stepson of Kalf Arnason, and a sister's son of Thorer Hund, was a remarkably handsome man, stout and strong. He was at this time eighteen years old; had made a good marriage in Hedemark, by which he got great wealth; and was besides one of the most popular of men, and formed to be a chief. He invited the king and his retinue home to him to a feast. The king accepted the invitation, went to Thorer's, and was well received. The entertainment was very splendid; they were excellently treated, and all that

was set before the guests was of the best that could be got. The king and his people talked among themselves of the excellence of everything, and knew not what they should admire the most,—whether Thorer's house outside, or the inside furniture, the table service, or the liquors, or the host who gave them such a feast. But Dag said little about it. The king used often to speak to Dag, and ask him about various things; and he had proved the truth of all that Dag had said, both of things that had happened or were to happen, and therefore the king had much confidence in what he said. The king called Dag to him to have a private conversation together, and spoke to him about many things. Afterwards the king turned the conversation on Thorer,—what an excellent man Thorer was, and what a superb feast he had made for them. Dag answered but little to this, but agreed it was true what the king said. The king then asked Dag what disposition or faith he found in Thorer. Dag replied that he must certainly consider Thorer of a good disposition, if he be really what most people believe him to be. The king told him to answer direct what he was asked, and said that it was his duty to do so. Dag replies, "Then thou must allow me to determine the punishment if I disclose his faith." The king replied that he would not submit his decision to another man, but again ordered Dag to reply to what he asked.

Dag replies, "The sovereign's order goes before all. I find this disposition in Thorer, as in so many others, that he is too greedy of money."

The king: "Is he then a thief, or a robber?"

"He is neither."

"What is he then?"

"To win money he is a traitor to his sovereign. He has taken money from King Canute the Great for thy head."

The king asks, "What proof hast thou of the truth of this?"

Dag: "He has upon his right arm, above the elbow, a thick gold ring, which King Canute gave him, and which he lets no man see."

This ended their conference, and the king was very wroth. Now as the king sat at table, and the guests had drunk a while with great mirth, and Thorer went round to see the guests well served, the king ordered Thorer to be called to him. He went up before the table, and laid his hands upon it.

The king asked, "How old a man art thou, Thorer?"

He answered, "I am eighteen years old."

"A stout man thou art for those years, and thou hast been fortunate also."

Then the king took his right hand, and felt it towards the elbow.

Thorer said, "Take care, for I have a boil upon my arm."

The king held his hand there, and felt there was something hard under it. "Hast thou not heard," said he, "that I am a physician? Let me see the boil."

As Thorer saw it was of no use to conceal it longer, he took off the ring and laid it on the table.

The king asked if that was the gift of King Canute.

Thorer replied that he could not deny it was.

The king ordered him to be seized and laid in irons. Kalf came up and entreated for mercy, and offered money for him, which also was seconded by many; but the king was so wroth that nobody could get in a word. He said Thorer should suffer the doom he had prepared for himself. Thereupon he ordered Thorer to be killed. This deed was much detested in the Uplands, and not less in the Throndhjem country, where many of Thorer's connections were. Kalf took the death of this man much to heart, for he had been his foster-son in childhood.

176.—THE FALL OF GRJOTGARD.

Grjotgard Olverson, Thorer's brother, and the eldest of the brothers, was a very wealthy man, and had a great troop of people about him. He lived also at this time in Hedemark. When he heard that Thorer had been killed, he made an attack upon the places where the king's goods and men were; but, between whiles, he kept himself in the forest and other secret places. When the king heard of this disturbance, he had inquiry made about Grjotgard's haunts, and found out that he had taken up night-quarters not far from where the king was. King Olaf set out in the night-time, came there about day-dawn, and placed a circle of men round the house in which Grjotgard was sleeping. Grjotgard and his men, roused by the stir of people and clash of arms, ran to their weapons, and Grjotgard himself sprang to the front room. He asked who commanded the troop; and it was answered him, "King Olaf was come there." Grjotgard asked if

the king would hear his words. The king, who stood at the door, said that Grjotgard might speak what he pleased, and he would hear his words. Grjotgard said, "I do not beg for mercy;" and at the same moment he rushed out, having his shield over his head, and his drawn sword in his hand. It was not so much light that he could see clearly. He struck his sword at the king; but Arnbjorn ran in, and the thrust pierced him under his armour into his stomach, and Arnbjorn got his death-wound. Grjotgard was killed immediately, and most of his people with him. After this event the king turned back to the south to Viken.

177.—KING OLAF SENDS FOR HIS SHIPS AND GOODS.

Now when the king came to Tunsberg he sent men out to all the districts, and ordered the people out upon a levy. He had but a small provision of shipping, and there were only bondes' vessels to be got. From the districts in the near neighbourhood many people came to him, but few from any distance; and it was soon found that the people had turned away from the king. King Olaf sent people to Gautland for his ships, and other goods and wares which had been left there in autumn; but the progress of these men was very slow, for it was no better now than in autumn to sail through the Sound, as King Canute had in spring fitted out an army throughout the whole of the Danish dominions, and had no fewer than 1200 vessels.

178.—KING OLAF'S COUNSELS.

The news came to Norway that King Canute had as-

sembled an immense armament through all Denmark, with which he intended to conquer Norway. When this became known the people were less willing to join King Olaf, and he got but little aid from the bondes. The king's men often spoke about this among themselves. Sigvat tells of it thus:—

"Our men are few, our ships are small,
While England's king is strong in all;
But yet our king is not afraid—
O! never be such king betrayed!
'Tis evil counsel to deprive
Our king of countrymen to strive
To save their country, sword in hand:
'Tis money that betrays our land."

The king held meetings with the men of the court, and sometimes House-things with all his people, and consulted with them what they should, in their opinion, undertake. "We must not conceal from ourselves," said he, "that Canute will come here this summer; and that he has, as ye all know, a large force, and we have at present but few men to oppose to him; and, as matters now stand, we cannot depend much on the fidelity of the country people." The king's men replied to his speech in various ways; but it is said that Sigvat the skald replied thus, advising flight, as treachery, not cowardice, was the cause of it:—

"We may well fly, when even our foe
Offers us money if we go.
I may be blamed, accused of fear;
But treachery, not faith, rules here.
Men may retire who long have shown
Their faith and love, and now alone
Retire because they cannot save—
This is no treachery in the brave."

179.—HAREK OF THJOTTA BURNS GRANKEL AND HIS MEN.

The same spring (1028) it happened in Halogaland that Harek of Thjotta remembered how Asmund Grankelson had plundered and beaten his house-servants. A

cutter with twenty rowing-benches, which belonged to Harek, was afloat in front of the house, with tent and deck, and he spread the report that he intended to go south to Throndhjem. One evening Harek went on board with his house-servants, about eighty men, who rowed the whole night; and he came towards morning to Grankel's house, and surrounded it with his men. They then made an attack on the house, and set fire to it; and Grankel with his people were burnt, and some were killed outside; and in all about thirty men lost their lives. After this deed Harek returned home, and sat quietly in his farm. Asmund was with King Olaf when he heard of it; therefore there was nobody in Halogaland to sue Harek for mulct for this deed, nor did he offer any satisfaction.

180.—KING CANUTE'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

Canute the Great collected his forces, and went to Limfjord. When he was ready with his equipment he sailed from thence with his whole fleet to Norway; made all possible speed, and did not land to the eastward of the Fjords, but crossed Folden, and landed in Agder, where he summoned a Thing. The bondes came down from the upper country to hold a Thing with Canute, who was everywhere in that country accepted as king. Then he placed men over the districts, and took hostages from the bondes, and no man opposed him. King Olaf was in Tunsberg when Canute's fleet sailed across the mouth of the fjord. Canute sailed northwards along the coast, and people came to him from all the districts, and

promised him fealty. He lay a while in Egersund, where Erling Skjalgson came to him with many people, and King Canute and Erling renewed their league of friendship. Among other things, Canute promised Erling the whole country between Stad and Rygiarbit to rule over. Then King Canute proceeded; and, to be short in our tale, did not stop until he came to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros. In Throndhjem he called together a Thing for the eight districts, at which King Canute was chosen king of all Norway. Thorer Hund, who had come with King Canute from Denmark, was there, and also Harek of Thjotta; and both were made sheriffs of the king, and took the oath of fealty to him. King Canute gave them great fiefs, and also right to the Lapland trade, and presented them besides with great gifts. He enriched all men who were inclined to enter into friendly accord with him both with fiefs and money, and gave them greater power than they had before.

181.—OF KING CANUTE.

When King Canute had laid the whole of Norway under his authority, he called together a numerous Thing, both of his own people and of the people of the country; and at it he made proclamation, that he made his relation Earl Hakon the governor-in-chief of all the land in Norway that he had conquered in this expedition. In like manner he led his son Hardaknut to the high-seat at his side, gave him the title of king, and therewith the whole Danish dominion. King Canute took as hostages from all lendermen and great bondes in Norway either their

sons, brothers, or other near connections, or the men who were dearest to them and appeared to him most suitable; by which he, as before observed, secured their fidelity to him. As soon as Earl Hakon had attained this power in Norway his brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer, made an agreement with him, and received back all the fiefs he formerly had possessed while the earls ruled the country. King Canute gave Einar great gifts, and bound him by great kindness to his interests; and promised that Einar should be the greatest and most important man in Norway, among those who did not hold the highest dignity, as long as he had power over the country. He added to this, that Einar appeared to him the most suitable man to hold the highest title of honour in Norway if no earls remained, and his son Eindride also, on account of his high birth. Einar placed a great value on these promises, and, in return, promised the greatest fidelity. Einar's chiefship began anew with this.

182—OF THORARIN LOFTUNGA.

There was a man by name Thorarin Loftunga, an Icelander by birth, and a great skald, who had been much with the kings and other great chiefs. He was now with King Canute the Great, and had composed a flock, or short poem, in his praise. When the king heard of this he was very angry, and ordered him to bring the next day a drapa, or long poem, by the time he went to table; and if he failed to do so, said the king, "he shall be hanged for his impudence in composing such a small poem about King Canute." Thorarin then composed a

stave as a refrain, which he inserted in the poem, and also augmented it with several other strophes or verses. This was the refrain:—

"Canute protects his realm, as Jove,
Guardian of Greece, his realm above."

King Canute rewarded him for the poem with fifty marks of silver. The poem was called the "Headransom (Höfudlausn)." Thorarin composed another poem about King Canute, which was called the "Campaign Poem (Togdrápa);" and therein he tells King Canute's expedition when he sailed from Denmark to Norway; and the following are strophes from one of the parts of this poem:—

"Canute with all his men is out,
Under the heavens in war-ships stout,—
Out on the sea, from Limfjord's green,
My good, my brave friend's fleet is seen.
The men of Adger on the coast
Tremble to see this mighty host:
The guilty tremble as they spy
The victor's fleet beneath the sky.

"The sight surpasses far the tale,
As glacing in the sun they sail;
The king's ship glittering all with gold,
And splendour there not to be told.
Round Lister many a coal-black mast
Of Canute's fleet is gliding past.
And now through Eger sound they ride,
Upon the gently heaving tide.

"And all the sound is covered o'er
With ships and sails, from shore to shore,
A mighty king, a mighty host,
Hiding the sea on Eger coast.
And peaceful men in haste now hie
Up Hiornagla-hill the fleet to spy,
As round the ness where Stad now lies
Each high-stemmed ship in splendour flies.

"Nor seemed the voyage long, I trow,
To warrior on the high-built bow,
As o'er the ocean-mountains riding
The land and hill seem past him gliding.
With whistling breeze and flashing spray
Past Stein the gay ships dashed away;
In open sea, the southern gale
Filled every wide out-bellying sail.

"Still on they fly, still northward go,
Till he who conquers every foe,
The mighty Canute, came to land,
Far in the north on Throndhjem's strand.
There this great king of Jutland race,
Whose deeds and gifts surpass in grace
All other kings, bestowed the throne
Of Norway on his sister's son.

"To his own son he gave the crown
(This I must add to his renown)
Of Denmark—land of shadowy vales,
In which the white swan trims her sails."

Here it is told that King Canute's expedition was grander than saga can tell; but Thorarin sang thus because he would pride himself upon being one of King Canute's retinue when he came to Norway.

183—OF THE MESSENGERS SENT BY KING OLAF FOR HIS SHIPS.

The men whom King Olaf had sent eastwards to Gautland after his ships took with them the vessels they thought the best, and burnt the rest. The ship-apparel and other goods belonging to the king and his men they also took with them; and when they heard that King Canute had gone to Norway they sailed west through the Sound, and then north to Viken to King Olaf, to whom they delivered his ships. He was then at Tunsberg. When King Olaf learnt that King Canute was sailing north along the coast, King Olaf steered with his fleet into Oslo fjord, and into a branch of it called Drafn, where he lay quiet until King Canute's fleet had sailed southwards again. On this expedition which King Canute made from the North along the coast, he held a Thing in each district, and in every Thing the country was bound by oath in fealty to him, and hostages were given him. He went eastward across the mouths of the fjords to Sarpsborg, and held a Thing there, and, as elsewhere, the country was surrendered to him under oath of fidelity. King Canute then returned south to Denmark, after having conquered Norway without stroke of sword, and he ruled now over three kingdoms. So says Halvard Hareksblese when he sang of King Canute:—

"The warrior-king, whose blood-stain'd shield
Has shone on many a hard-fought field,
England and Denmark now has won,
And o'er three kingdoms rules alone.
Peace now he gives us fast and sure,
Since Norway too is made secure
By him who oft, in days of yore,
Glutted the hawk and wolf with gore."

184.—OF KING OLAF IN HIS PROCEEDINGS.

King Olaf sailed with his ships out to Tunsberg, as soon as he heard that King Canute had turned back, and was gone south to Denmark. He then made himself ready with the men who liked to follow him, and had then thirteen ships. Afterwards he sailed out along Viken; but got little money, and few men, as those only followed him who dwelt in islands, or on outlying points of land. The king landed in such places, but got only the money and men that fell in his way; and he soon perceived that the country had abandoned him. He proceeded on according to the winds. This was in the beginning of winter (1029). The wind turned very late in the season in their favour, so that they lay long in the Seley islands, where they heard the news from the North, through merchants, who told the king that Erling Skjalgson had collected a great force in Jadar, and that his ship lay fully rigged outside of the land, together with many other vessels belonging to the bondes; namely, skiffs, fisher-yachts, and great row-boats. Then the king sailed with his fleet from the East, and lay a while in Egersund. Both parties heard of each other now, and Erling assembled all the men he could.

185.—OF KING OLAF'S VOYAGE.

On Thomasmas, before Yule (Dec. 21), the king left

the harbour as soon as day appeared. With a good but rather strong gale he sailed northwards past Jadar. The weather was rainy, with dark flying clouds in the sky. The spies went immediately in through the Jadar country when the king sailed past it; and as soon as Erling heard that the king was sailing past from the East, he let the war-horn call all the people on board, and the whole force hastened to the ships, and prepared for battle. The king's ship passed by Jadar at a great rate; but thereafter turned in towards the land, intending to run up the fjords to gather men and money. Erling Skjalgson perceived this, and sailed after him with a great force and many ships. Swiftly their vessels flew, for they had nothing on board but men and arms: but Erling's ship went much faster than the others; therefore he took in a reef in the sails, and waited for the other vessels. Then the king saw that Erling with his fleet gained upon him fast; for the king's ships were heavily laden, and were besides water-soaked, having been in the sea the whole summer, autumn, and winter, up to this time. He saw also that there would be a great want of men, if he should go against the whole of Erling's fleet when it was assembled. He hailed from ship to ship the orders to let the sails gently sink, and to unship the booms and outriggers, which was done. When Erling saw this he calls out to his people, and orders them to get on more sail. "Ye see," says he, "that their sails are diminishing, and they are getting fast away from our sight." He took the reef out of the sails of his ship, and outsailed all the others immediately; for Erling was very eager in his pursuit of King Olaf.

186.—OF ERLING SKJALGSON'S FALL.

King Olaf then steered in towards the Bokn fjord, by which the ships came out of sight of each other. Thereafter the king ordered his men to strike the sails, and row forwards through a narrow sound that was there, and all the ships lay collected within a rocky point. Then all the king's men put on their weapons. Erling sailed in through the sound, and observed nothing until the whole fleet was before him, and he saw the king's men rowing towards him with all their ships at once. Erling and his crew let fall the sails, and seized their weapons; but the king's fleet surrounded his ship on all sides. Then the fight began, and it was of the sharpest; but soon the greatest loss was among Erling's men. Erling stood on the quarter-deck of his ship. He had a helmet on his head, a shield before him, and a sword in his hand. Sigvat the skald had remained behind in Viken, and heard the tidings. He was a great friend of Erling, had received presents from him, and had been at his house. Sigvat composed a poem upon Erling's fall, in which there is the following verse:—

"Erling has set his ship on sea—
Against the king away is he:
He who oft lets the eagle stain
Her yellow feet in blood of slain.
His little war-ship side by side
With the king's fleet, the fray will bide.
Now sword to sword the fight is raging,
Which Erling with the king is waging."

Then Erling's men began to fall, and at the same moment his ship was carried by boarding, and every man of his died in his place. The king himself was amongst the foremost in the fray. So says Sigvat:—

"The king's men hewed with hasty sword,—
The king urged on the ship to board,—
All o'er the decks the wounded lay:
Right fierce and bloody was that fray.
In Tungur sound, on Jadar shore,
The decks were slippery with red gore;
Warm blood was dropping in the sound,
Where the king's sword was gleaming round."

So entirely had Erling's men fallen, that not a man remained standing in his ship but himself alone; for there was none who asked for quarter, or none who got it if he did ask. There was no opening for flight, for there lay ships all around Erling's ship on every side, and it is told for certain that no man attempted to fly; and Sigvat says:—

"All Erling's men fell in the fray,
Off Bokn fjord, this hard-fought day.
The brave king boarded, onward cheered,
And north of Tungur the deck was cleared.
Erling alone, the brave, the stout,
Cut off from all, yet still held out;
High on the stern—a sight to see—
In his lone ship alone stood he."

Then Erling was attacked both from the forecastle and from the other ships. There was a large space upon the poop which stood high above the other ships, and which nobody could reach but by arrow-shot, or partly with the thrust of spear, but which he always struck from him by parrying. Erling defended himself so manfully, that no example is known of one man having sustained the attack of so many men so long. Yet he never tried to get away, nor asked for quarter. So says Sigvat:—

"Skjalg's brave son no mercy craves,—
The battle's fury still he braves;
The spear-storm, through the air sharp singing,
Against his shield was ever ringing.
So Erling stood; but fate had willed
His life off Bokn should be spilled.
No braver man has, since his day,
Past Bokn fjord ta'en his way."

When Olaf went back a little upon the fore-deck he saw Erling's behaviour; and the king accosted him thus:—"Thou hast turned against me to-day, Erling."

He replies, "The eagle turns his claws in defence when torn asunder." Sigvat the skald tells thus of these words of Erling:—

"Erling, our best defence of old,—
Erling the brave, the brisk, the bold,—
Stood to his arms, gaily crying,
'Eagles should show their claws, though dying:'
The very words which once before
To Olaf he had said on shore,
At Utstein, when they both prepared
To meet the foe, and danger shared."

Then said the king, "Wilt thou enter into my service, Erling?"

"That I will," said he; took the helmet off his head, laid down his sword and shield, and went forward to the forecastle deck.

The king struck him in the chin with the sharp point of his battle-axe, and said, "I shall mark thee as a traitor to thy sovereign."

Then Aslak Fitiaskalle rose up, and struck Erling in the head with an axe, so that it stood fast in his brain, and was instantly his death-wound. Thus Erling lost his life.

The king said to Aslak, "May all ill luck attend thee for that stroke; for thou hast struck Norway out of my hands."

Aslak replied, "It is bad enough if that stroke displease thee, for I thought it was striking Norway into thy hands; and if I have given thee offence, sire, by this stroke, and have thy ill-will for it, it will go badly with me, for I will get so many men's ill-will and enmity for this deed that I would need all your protection and favour."

The king replied that he should have it.

Thereafter the king ordered every man to return to his

ship, and to get ready to depart as fast as he could. "We will not plunder the slain," says he, "and each man may keep what he has taken." The men returned to the ships and prepared themselves for the departure as quickly as possible; and scarcely was this done before the vessels of the bondes ran in from the south into the sound. It went with the bonde-army as is often seen, that the men, although many in numbers, know not what to do when they have experienced a check, have lost their chief, and are without leaders. None of Erling's sons were there, and the bondes therefore made no attack, and the king sailed on his way northwards. But the bondes took Erling's corpse, adorned it, and carried it with them home to Sole, and also the bodies of all who had fallen. There was great lamentation over Erling; and it has been a common observation among people, that Erling Skjalgson was the greatest and worthiest man in Norway of those who had no high title. Sigvat made these verses upon the occasion:—

"Thus Erling fell—and such a gain
To buy with such a loss was vain;
For better man than he ne'er died,
And the king's gain was small beside.

In truth no man I ever knew
Was, in all ways, so firm and true;
Free from servility and pride,
Honoured by all, yet thus he died."

Sigvat also says that Aslak had very unthinkingly committed this murder of his own kinsman:—

"Norway's brave defender's dead!
Aslak has heaped on his own head
The guilt of murdering his own kin:
May few be guilty of such sin!

His kinsman's murder on him lies—
Our forefathers, in sayings wise,
Have said, what is unknown to few,
'Kinsmen to kinsmen should be true.'"

187.—OF THE INSURRECTION OF AGDER DISTRICT.

Of Erling's sons some at that time were north in Throndhjem, some in Hordaland, and some in the Fjord

district, for the purpose of collecting men. When Erling's death was reported, the news came also that there was a levy raising in Agder, Hordaland, and Rogaland. Forces were raised and a great army assembled, under Erling's sons, to pursue King Olaf.

When King Olaf retired from the battle with Erling he went northward through the sounds, and it was late in the day. It is related that the king then made the following verses:—

"This night, with battle sounds wild ringing,
Small joy to the fair youth is bringing
Who sits in Jadar, little dreaming
O'er what this night the raven's screaming.
The far-descended Erling's life
Too soon has fallen; but, in the strife
He met the luck they well deserve
Who from their faith and fealty swerve."

Afterwards the king sailed with his fleet along the land northwards, and got certain tidings of the bondes assembling an army. There were many chiefs and lendermen at this time with King Olaf, and all the sons of Arne. Of this Bjarne Gullbrarskald speaks in the poem he composed about Kalf Arnason:—

"Kalf! thou hast fought at Bokn well;
Of thy brave doings all men tell:
When Harald's son his men urged on
To the hard strife, thy courage shone.
Thou soon hadst made a good Yule feast
For greedy wolf there in the East:
Where stone and spear were flying round,
There thou wast still the foremost found.
The people suffered in the strife
When noble Erling lost his life,
And north of Utstein many a speck
Of blood lay black upon the deck.
The king, 'tis clear, has been deceived,
By treason of his land bereaved;
And Agder now, whose force is great,
Will rule o'er all parts of the state."

King Olaf continued his voyage until he came north of Stad, and brought up at the Herey Isles. Here he heard the news that Earl Hakon had a great war-force in Throndhjem, and thereupon the king held a council with his people. Kalf Arnason urged much to advance to

Throndhjem, and fight Earl Hakon, notwithstanding the difference of numbers. Many others supported this advice, but others dissuaded from it, and the matter was left to the king's judgment.

188.—DEATH OF ASLAK FITIASKALLE.

Afterwards the king went into Steinavag, and remained there all night; but Aslak Fitiaskalle ran into Borgund, where he remained the night, and where Vigleik Arnason was before him. In the morning, when Aslak was about returning on board, Vigleik assaulted him, and sought to avenge Erling's murder. Aslak fell there. Some of the king's court-men, who had been home all summer, joined the king here. They came from Frekeysund, and brought the king tidings that Earl Hakon, and many lendermen with him, had come in the morning to Frekeysund with a large force; "and they will end thy days, sire, if they have strength enough." Now the king sent his men up to a hill that was near; and when they came to the top, and looked northwards to Bjarney Island, they perceived that a great armament of many ships was coming from the north, and they hastened back to the king with this intelligence. The king, who was lying there with only twelve ships, ordered the war-horn to sound, the tents to be taken down on his ships, and they took to their oars. When they were quite ready, and were leaving the harbour, the bonde army sailed north around Thiotande with twenty-five ships. The king then steered inside of Nyrfe Island, and inside of Hundsver. Now when King Olaf came right abreast of Borgund, the

ship which Aslak had steered came out to meet him, and when they found the king told him the tidings,—that Vigleik Arnason had killed Aslak Fitiaskalle, because he had killed Erling Skjalgson. The king took this news very angrily, but could not delay his voyage on account of the enemy and he sailed in by Vegsund and Skot. There some of his people left him; among others, Kalf Arnason, with many other lendermen and ship commanders, who all went to meet Earl Hakon. King Olaf, however, proceeded on his way without stopping until he came to Todar fjord, where he brought up at Valdal, and landed from his ship. He had then five ships with him, which he drew up upon the shore, and took care of their sails and materials. Then he set up his land-tent upon a point of land called Sult, where there are pretty flat fields, and set up a cross near to the point of land. A bonde, by name Bruse, who dwelt there in More, and was chief over the valley, came down to King Olaf, together with many other bondes, and received him well, and according to his dignity; and he was friendly, and pleased with their reception of him. Then the king asked if there was a passable road up in the country from the valley to Lesjar; and Bruse replied, that there was an urd in the valley called Skerfsurd not passable for man or beast. King Olaf answers, "That we must try, bonde, and it will go as God pleases. Come here in the morning with your yoke, and come yourself with it, and let us then see, when we come to the sloping precipice, what chance there may be, and if we cannot devise some means of coming over it with horses and people."

189.—CLEARING OF THE URD.

Now when day broke the bondes drove down with their yokes, as the king had told them. The clothes and weapons were packed upon horses, but the king and all the people went on foot. He went thus until he came to a place called Krosbrekka, and when he came up upon the hill he rested himself, sat down there a while, looked down over the fjord, and said, "A difficult expedition ye have thrown upon my hands, ye lendermen, who have now changed your fealty, although but a little while ago ye were my friends and faithful to me." There are now two crosses erected upon the bank on which the king sat. Then the king mounted a horse, and rode without stopping up the valley, until he came to the precipice. Then the king asked Bruse if there was no summer hut of cattle-herds in the neighbourhood, where they could remain. He said there was. The king ordered his land-tent to be set up, and remained there all night. In the morning the king ordered them to drive to the urd, and try if they could get across it with the waggons. They drove there, and the king remained in the meantime in his tent. Towards evening the king's court-men and the bondes came back, and told how they had had a very fatiguing labour, without making any progress, and that there never could be a road made that they could get across; so they continued there the second night, during which, for the whole night, the king was occupied in prayer. As soon as he observed day dawning he ordered his men to drive again to the urd, and try once more if they could get across it with the waggons; but they went very unwillingly, say-

ing nothing could be gained by it. When they were gone the man who had charge of the king's kitchen came, and said there were only two carcasses of young cattle remaining of provision: "Although you, sire, have 400 men, and there are 100 bondes besides." Then the king ordered that he should set all the kettles on the fire, and put a little bit of meat in each kettle, which was done. Then the king went there, and made the sign of the cross over each kettle, and told them to make ready the meat. The king then went to the urd called Skerfsurd, where a road should be cleared. When the king came all his people were sitting down, quite worn out with the hard labour. Bruse said, "I told you, sire, but you would not believe me, that we could make nothing of this urd. The king laid aside his cloak, and told them to go to work once more at the urd. They did so, and now twenty men could handle stones which before 100 men could not move from the place; and thus before midday the road was cleared so well that it was as passable for men, and for horses with packs, as a road in the plain fields. The king, after this, went down again to where the meat was, which place is called Olaf's Rock. Near the rock is a spring, at which Olaf washed himself; and therefore at the present day, when the cattle in the valley are sick, their illness is made better by their drinking at this well. Thereafter the king sat down to table with all the others; and when he was satisfied he asked if there was any other sheeling on the other side of the urd, and near the mountains, where they could pass the night. Bruse said there was such a sheeling, called Groningar; but that nobody could

pass the night there on account of witchcraft, and evil beings who were in the sheeling. Then the king said they must get ready for their journey, as he wanted to be at the sheeling for the night. Then came the kitchen-master to the king, and tells that there was come an extraordinary supply of provisions, and he did not know where it had come from, or how. The king thanked God for this blessing, and gave the bondes who drove down again to their valley some rations of food, but remained himself all night in the sheeling. In the middle of the night, while the people were asleep, there was heard in the cattle-fold a dreadful cry, and these words: "Now Olaf's prayers are burning me," says the spirit, "so that I can no longer be in my habitation; now must I fly, and never more come to this fold." When the king's people awoke in the morning the king proceeded to the mountains, and said to Bruse, "Here shall now a farm be settled, and the bonde who dwells here shall never want what is needful for the support of life; and never shall his crop be destroyed by frost, although the crops be frozen on the farms both above it and below it." Then the king proceeded over the mountains, and came to a farm called Einby, where he remained for the night. King Olaf had then been fifteen years king of Norway (1015-1029), including the year both he and Svein were in the country, and this year we have now been telling about. It was, namely, a little past Yule when the king left his ships and took to the land, as before related. Of this portion of his reign the priest Are Thorgilson the Wise was the first who wrote; and he was both faithful

in his story, of a good memory, and so old a man that he could remember the men, and had heard their accounts, who were so old that through their age they could remember these circumstances as he himself wrote them in his books, and he named the men from whom he received his information. Otherwise it is generally said that King Olaf had been fifteen years king of Norway when he fell; but they who say so reckon to Earl Svein's government, the last year he was in the country, for King Olaf lived fifteen years afterwards as king.

190.—OLAF'S PROPHECIES.

When the king had been one night at Lesjar he proceeded on his journey with his men, day by day; first into Gudbrandsdal, and from thence out to Hedemark. Now it was seen who had been his friends, for they followed him; but those who had served him with less fidelity separated from him, and some showed him even indifference, or even full hostility, which afterwards was apparent; and also it could be seen clearly in many Upland people that they took very ill his putting Thorer to death, as before related. King Olaf gave leave to return home to many of his men who had farms and children to take care of; for it seemed to them uncertain what safety there might be for the families and property of those who left the country with him. Then the king explained to his friends his intention of leaving the country, and going first east into Svithjod, and there taking his determination as to where he should go; but he let his friends know his intention to return to the country, and

regain his kingdom, if God should grant him longer life; and he did not conceal his expectation that the people of Norway would again return to their fealty to him. "I think," says he, "that Earl Hakon will have Norway but a short time under his power, which many will not think an extraordinary expectation, as Earl Hakon has had but little luck against me: but probably few people will trust to my prophecy, that Canute the Great will in the course of a few years die, and his kingdoms vanish; and there will be no risings in favour of his race." When the king had ended his speech, his men prepared themselves for their departure. The king, with the troop that followed him, turned east to Eid forest. And there were along with him the Queen Astrid; their daughter Ulfhild; Magnus, King Olaf's son; Ragnvald Brusason; the three sons of Arne, Thorberg, Fin, and Arne, with many lendermen; and the king's attendants consisted of many chosen men. Bjorn the marshal got leave to go home, and he went to his farm, and many others of the king's friends returned home with his permission to their farms. The king begged them to let him know the events which might happen in the country, and which it might be important for him to know: and now the king proceeded on his way.

191.—KING OLAF PROCEEDS TO RUSSIA.

It is to be related of King Olaf's journey, that he went first from Norway eastward through Eid forest to Vermaland, then to Vatnsby, and through the forests in which there are roads, until he came out in Nerike district. There dwelt a rich and powerful man in that part called Sig-

tryg, who had a son, Ivar, who afterwards became a distinguished person. Olaf stayed with Sigtryg all spring (1029); and when summer came he made ready for a journey, procured a ship for himself, and without stopping went on to Russia to King Jarisleif and his queen Ingegerd; but his own queen Astrid, and their daughter Ulfhild, remained behind in Svithjod, and the king took his son Magnus eastward with him. King Jarisleif received King Olaf in the kindest manner, and made him the offer to remain with him, and to have so much land as was necessary for defraying the expense of the entertainment of his followers. King Olaf accepted this offer thankfully, and remained there. It is related that King Olaf was distinguished all his life for pious habits, and zeal in his prayers to God. But afterwards, when he saw his own power diminished, and that of his adversaries augmented, he turned all his mind to God's service; for he was not distracted by other thoughts, or by the labour he formerly had upon his hands, for during all the time he sat upon the throne he was endeavouring to promote what was most useful: and first to free and protect the country from foreign chiefs' oppressions, then to convert the people to the right faith; and also to establish law and the rights of the country, which he did by letting justice have its way, and punishing evil-doers.

192—CAUSES OF THE REVOLT AGAINST KING OLAF.

It had been an old custom in Norway that the sons of lendermen, or other great men, went out in war-ships to gather property, and they marauded both in the coun-

try and out of the country. But after King Olaf came to the sovereignty he protected the country, so that he abolished all plundering there; and even if they were the sons of powerful men who committed any depredation, or did what the king considered against law, he did not spare them at all, but they must suffer in life or limbs; and no man's entreaties, and no offer of money-penalties, could help them. So says Sigvat:—

"They who on viking cruises drove
With gifts of red gold often strove
To buy their safety—but our chief
Had no compassion for the thief.
He made the bravest lose his head
Who robbed at sea, and pirates led;
And his just sword gave peace to all,
Sparing no robber, great or small."

And he also says:—

"Great king! whose sword on many a field
Food to the wandering wolf did yield,
And then the thief and pirate band
Swept wholly off by sea and land—
Good king! who for the people's sake
Set hands and feet upon a stake,
When plunderers of great name and bold
Harried the country as of old.
The country's guardian showed his might
When oft he made his just sword bite
Through many a viking's neck and hair,
And never would the guilty spare.
King Magnus' father, I must say,
Did many a good deed in his day.
Olaf the Thick was stern and stout,
Much good his victories brought out."

He punished great and small with equal severity, which appeared to the chief people of the country too severe; and animosity rose to the highest when they lost relatives by the king's just sentence, although they were in reality guilty. This was the origin of the hostility of the great men of the country to King Olaf, that they could not bear his just judgments. He again would rather renounce his dignity than omit righteous judgment. The accusation against him, of being stingy with his money, was not just, for he was a most generous man towards his friends; but that alone was the cause of the discontent raised against him, that he appeared hard and severe in

his retributions. Besides, King Canute offered great sums of money, and the great chiefs were corrupted by this, and by his offering them greater dignities than they had possessed before. The inclinations of the people, also, were all in favour of Earl Hakon, who was much beloved by the country folks when he ruled the country before.

193.—OF JOKUL BARDSON.

Earl Hakon had sailed with his fleet from Throndhjem, and gone south to More against King Olaf, as before related. Now when the king bore away, and ran into the fjord, the earl followed him thither; and then Kalf Arnason came to meet him, with many of the men who had deserted King Olaf. Kalf was well received. The earl steered in through Todar fjord to Valdal, where the king had laid up his ships on the strand. He took the ships which belonged to the king, had them put upon the water and rigged, and cast lots, and put commanders in charge of them according to the lots. There was a man called Jokul, who was an Icelander, a son of Bard Jokulson of Vatnsdal; the lot fell upon Jokul to command the Bison, which King Olaf himself had commanded. Jokul made these verses upon it:—

"Mine is the lot to take the helm
Which Olaf owned, who owned the realm;
From Sult King Olaf's ship to steer
(Ill luck I dread on his reindeer).
My girl will never hear the tiding,
Till o'er the wild wave I come riding
In Olaf's ship, who loved his gold,
And lost his ships with wealth untold."

We may here shortly tell what happened a long time after,—that this Jokul fell in with King Olaf's men in the island of Gotland, and the king ordered him to be

taken out to be beheaded. A willow twig accordingly was plaited in with his hair, and a man held him fast by it. Jokul sat down upon a bank, and a man swung the axe to execute him; but Jokul hearing the sound, raised his head, and the blow struck him in the head, and made a dreadful wound. As the king saw it would be his death-wound, he ordered them to let him lie with it. Jokul raised himself up, and he sang:—

"My hard fate I mourn,—
Alas! my wounds burn,
My red wounds are gaping,
My life-blood escaping.
My wounds burn sore;
But I suffer still more
From the king's angry word,
Than his sharp-biting sword."

194.—OF KALF ARNASON.

Kalf Arnason went with Earl Hakon north to Throndhjem, and the earl invited him to enter into his service. Kalf said he would first go home to his farm at Eggja, and afterwards make his determination; and Kalf did so. When he came home he found his wife Sigrid much irritated; and she reckoned up all the sorrow inflicted on her, as she insisted, by King Olaf. First, he had ordered her first husband Olver to be killed. "And now since," says she, "my two sons; and thou thyself, Kalf, wert present when they were cut off, and which I little expected from thee." Kalf says, it was much against his will that Thorer was killed. "I offered money-penalty for him," says he; "and when Grjotgard was killed I lost my brother Arnbjorn at the same time." She replies, "It is well thou hast suffered this from the king; for thou mayest perhaps avenge him, although thou wilt not avenge my injuries. Thou sawest how thy foster-son Thorer was killed, with all the regard of the king for thee." She

frequently brought out such vexatious speeches to Kalf, to which he often answered angrily; but yet he allowed himself to be persuaded by her to enter into the earl's service, on condition of renewing his fiefs to him. Sigrid sent word to the earl how far she had brought the matter with Kalf. As soon as the earl heard of it, he sent a message to Kalf that he should come to the town to him. Kalf did not decline the invitation, but came directly to Nidaros, and waited on the earl, who received him kindly. In their conversation it was fully agreed upon that Kalf should go into the earl's service, and should receive great fiefs. After this Kalf returned home, and had the greater part of the interior of the Throndhjem country under him. As soon as it was spring Kalf rigged out a ship that belonged to him, and when she was ready he put to sea, and sailed west to England; for he had heard that in spring King Canute was to sail from Denmark to England, and that King Canute had given Harald, a son of Thorkel the High, an earldom in Denmark. Kalf Arnason went to King Canute as soon as he arrived in England. Bjarne Gullbrarskald tells of this:—

"King Olaf eastward o'er the sea
To Russia's monarch had to flee;
Our Harald's brother ploughed the main,
And furrowed white its dark-blue plain.

Whilst thou—the truth I still will say,
Nor fear nor favour can me sway—
Thou to King Canute hastened fast,
As soon as Olaf's luck was past."

Now when Kalf came to King Canute the king received him particularly well, and had many conversations with him. Among other things, King Canute, in a conference, asked Kalf to bind himself to raise a warfare against King Olaf, if ever he should return to the country. "And for which," says the king, "I will give

thee the earldom, and place thee to rule over Norway; and my relation Hakon shall come to me, which will suit him better, for he is so honourable and trustworthy that I believe he would not even throw a spear against the person of King Olaf if he came back to the country." Kalf lent his ear to what the king proposed, for he had a great desire to attain this high dignity; and this conclusion was settled upon between King Canute and Kalf. Kalf then prepared to return home, and on his departure he received splendid presents from King Canute. Bjarne the skald tells of these circumstances:—

"Sprung from old earls!—to England's lord
Thou owest many a thankful word
For many a gift: if all be true,
Thy interest has been kept in view;
For when thy course was bent for home,
(Although that luck is not yet come,)
'That Norway should be thine,' 'tis said,
The London king a promise made."

Kalf thereafter returned to Norway, and came to his farm.

195.—OF THE DEATH OF EARL HAKON.

Earl Hakon left the country this summer (1029), and went to England, and when he came there was well received by the king. The earl had a bride in England, and he travelled to conclude this marriage, and as he intended holding his wedding in Norway, he came to procure those things for it in England which it was difficult to get in Norway. In autumn he made ready for his return, but it was somewhat late before he was clear for sea; but at last he set out. Of his voyage all that can be told is, that the vessel was lost, and not a man escaped. Some relate that the vessel was seen north of Caithness in the evening in a heavy storm, and the wind blowing out of

Pentland Firth. They who believe this report say the vessel drove out among the breakers of the ocean; but with certainty people knew only that Earl Hakon was missing in the ocean, and nothing belonging to the ship ever came to land. The same autumn some merchants came to Norway, who told the tidings that were going through the country of Earl Hakon being missing; and all men knew that he neither came to Norway nor to England that autumn, so that Norway that winter was without a head.

196.—OF BJORN THE MARSHAL.

Bjorn the marshal sat at home on his farm after his parting from King Olaf. Bjorn was a celebrated man; therefore it was soon reported far and wide that he had set himself down in quietness. Earl Hakon and the other chiefs of the country heard this also, and sent persons with a verbal message to Bjorn. When the messengers arrived Bjorn received them well; and afterwards Bjorn called them to him to a conference, and asked their business. He who was their foreman presented to Bjorn the salutations of King Canute, Earl Hakon, and of several chiefs. "King Canute," says he, "has heard much of thee, and that thou hast been long a follower of King Olaf the Thick, and hast been a great enemy of King Canute; and this he thinks not right, for he will be thy friend, and the friend of all worthy men, if thou wilt turn from thy friendship to King Olaf and become his enemy. And the only thing now thou canst do is to seek friendship and protection there where it is most readily

to be found, and which all men in this northern world think it most honourable to be favoured with. Ye who have followed Olaf the Thick should consider how he is now separated from you; and that now ye have no aid against King Canute and his men, whose lands ye plundered last summer, and whose friends ye murdered. Therefore ye ought to accept, with thanks, the friendship which the king offers you; and it would become you better if you offered money even in mulct to obtain it."

When he had ended his speech Bjorn replies, "I wish now to sit quietly at home, and not to enter into the service of any chief."

The messenger answers, "Such men as thou art are just the right men to serve the king; and now I can tell thee there are just two things for thee to choose,—either to depart in peace from thy property, and wander about as thy comrade Olaf is doing; or, which is evidently better, to accept King Canute's and Earl Hakon's friendship, become their man, and take the oaths of fealty to them. Receive now thy reward." And he displayed to him a large bag full of English money.

Bjorn was a man fond of money, and self-interested; and when he saw the silver he was silent, and reflected with himself what resolution he should take. It seemed to him much to abandon his property, as he did not think it probable that King Olaf would ever have a rising in his favour in Norway. Now when the messenger saw that Bjorn's inclinations were turned towards the money, he threw down two thick gold rings, and said, "Take the money at once, Bjorn, and swear the oaths to King

Canute; for I can promise thee that this money is but a trifle, compared to what thou wilt receive if thou followest King Canute."

By the heap of money, the fine promises, and the great presents, he was led by covetousness, took the money, went into King Canute's service, and gave the oaths of fealty to King Canute and Earl Hakon, and then the messengers departed.

197.—OF BJORN THE MARSHAL'S JOURNEY.

When Bjorn heard the tidings that Earl Hakon was missing he soon altered his mind, and was much vexed with himself for having been a traitor in his fidelity to King Olaf. He thought, now, that he was freed from the oath by which he had bound himself to Earl Hakon. It seemed to Bjorn that now there was some hope that King Olaf might again come to the throne of Norway if he came back, as the country was without a head. Bjorn therefore immediately made himself ready to travel, and took some men with him. He then set out on his journey, travelling night and day, on horseback when he could, and by ship when he found occasion; and never halted until he came, after Yule, east to Russia to King Olaf, who was very glad to see Bjorn. Then the king inquired much about the news from Norway. Bjorn tells him that Earl Hakon was missing, and the kingdom left without a head. At this news the men who had followed King Olaf were very glad,—all who had left property, connections, and friends in Norway; and the longing for home was awakened in them. Bjorn told King Olaf

much news from Norway, and very anxious the king was to know, and asked much how his friends had kept their fidelity towards him. Bjorn answered, it had gone differently with different people.

Then Bjorn stood up, fell at the king's feet, held his foot, and said, "All is in your power, sire, and in God's! I have taken money from King Canute's men, and sworn them the oaths of fealty; but now will I follow thee, and not part from thee so long as we both live."

The king replies, "Stand up, Bjorn: thou shalt be reconciled with me; but reconcile thy perjury with God. I can see that but few men in Norway have held fast by their fealty, when such men as thou art could be false to me. But true it is also that people sit in great danger when I am distant, and they are exposed to the wrath of my enemies."

Bjorn then reckoned up those who had principally bound themselves to rise in hostility against the king and his men; and named, among others, Erling's son in Jadar and their connections, Einar Tambaskelfer, Kalf Arnorson, Thorer Hund, and Harek of Thjotta.

198.—OF KING OLAF.

After King Olaf came to Russia he was very thoughtful, and weighed what counsel he now should follow. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd offered him to remain with them, and receive a kingdom called Vulgaria, which is a part of Russia, and in which land the people were still heathen. King Olaf thought over this offer; but when he proposed it to his men they dissuaded him from set-

tling himself there, and urged the king to betake himself to Norway to his own kingdom: but the king himself had resolved almost in his own mind to lay down his royal dignity, to go out into the world to Jerusalem, or other holy places, and to enter into some order of monks. But yet the thought lay deep in his soul to recover again, if there should be any opportunity for him, his kingdom in Norway. When he thought over this, it recurred to his mind how all things had gone prosperously with him during the first ten years of his reign, and how afterwards every thing he undertook became heavy, difficult, and hard; and that he had been unlucky, on all occasions in which he had tried his luck. On this account he doubted if it would be prudent to depend so much upon his luck, as to go with so little strength into the hands of his enemies, seeing that all the people of the country had taken part with them to oppose King Olaf. Such cares he had often on his mind, and he left his cause to God, praying that He would do what to Him seemed best. These thoughts he turned over in his mind, and knew not what to resolve upon; for he saw how evidently dangerous that was which his inclination was most bent upon.

199.—OF KING OLAF'S DREAM.

One night the king lay awake in his bed, thinking with great anxiety about his determination, and at last, being tired of thinking, sleep came over him towards morning; but his sleep was so light that he thought he was awake, and could see all that was doing in the house. Then he

saw a great and superb man, in splendid clothes, standing by his bed; and it came into the king's mind that this was King Olaf Trygvason who had come to him. This man said to him, "Thou are very sick of thinking about thy future resolutions; and it appears to me wonderful that these thoughts should be so tumultuous in thy soul that thou shouldst even think of laying down the kingly dignity which God hath given thee, and of remaining here and accepting of a kingdom from foreign and unknown kings. Go back rather to that kingdom which thou hast received in heritage, and rule over it with the strength which God hath given thee, and let not thy inferiors take it from thee. It is the glory of a king to be victorious over his enemies, and it is a glorious death to die in battle. Or art thou doubtful if thou hast right on thy side in the strife with thine enemies? Thou must have no doubts, and must not conceal the truth from thyself. Thou must go back to thy country, and God will give open testimony that the kingdom is thine by property." When the king awoke he thought he saw the man's shoulders going out. From this time the king's courage rose, and he fixed firmly his resolution to return to Norway; to which his inclination also tended most, and which he also found was the desire of all his men. He bethought himself also that the country being without a chief could be easily attacked, from what he had heard, and that after he came himself many would turn back towards him. When the king told his determination to his people they all gave it their approbation joyfully.

200.—OF KING OLAF'S HEALING POWERS.

It is related that once upon a time, while King Olaf was in Russia, it happened that the son of an honest widow had a sore boil upon his neck, of which the lad lay very ill; and as he could not swallow any food, there was little hope of his life. The boy's mother went to Queen Ingegerd, with whom she was acquainted, and showed her the lad. The queen said she knew no remedy for it. "Go," said she, "to King Olaf, he is the best physician here; and beg him to lay his hands on thy lad, and bring him my words if he will not otherwise do it." She did as the queen told her; and when she found the king she says to him that her son is dangerously ill of a boil in his neck, and begs him to lay his hand on the boil. The king tells her he is not a physician, and bids her go to where there were physicians. She replies, that the queen had told her to come to him; "and told me to add the request from her, that you would would use the remedy you understood, and she said that thou art the best physician here in the town." Then the king took the lad, laid his hands upon his neck, and felt the boil for a long time, until the boy made a very wry face. Then the king took a piece of bread, laid it in the figure of the cross upon the palm of his hand, and put it into the boy's mouth. He swallowed it down, and from that time all the soreness left his neck, and in a few days he was quite well, to the great joy of his mother and all his relations. Then first came Olaf into the repute of having as much healing power in his hands as is ascribed to men who have been gifted by nature with healing by the touch; and after-

wards when his miracles were universally acknowledged, this also was considered one of his miracles.

201.—KING OLAF BURNS THE WOOD SHAVINGS ON HIS HAND FOR HIS SABBATH BREACH.

It happened one Sunday that the king sat in his high-seat at the dinner table, and had fallen into such deep thought that he did not observe how time went. In one hand he had a knife, and in the other a piece of fir-wood from which he cut splinters from time to time. The table-servant stood before him with a bowl in his hands; and seeing what the king was about, and that he was involved in thought, he said, "It is Monday, sire, to-morrow." The king looked at him when he heard this, and then it came into his mind what he was doing on the Sunday. Then the king ordered a lighted candle to be brought him, swept together all the shavings he had made, set them on fire, and let them burn upon his naked hand; showing thereby that he would hold fast by God's law and commandment, and not trespass without punishment on what he knew to be right.

202.—OF KING OLAF.

When King Olaf had resolved on his return home, he made known his intention to King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd. They dissuaded him from this expedition, and said he should receive as much power in their dominions as he thought desirable; but begged him not to put himself within the reach of his enemies with so few men as he had. Then King Olaf told them of his dream;

adding, that he believed it to be God's will and providence that it should be so. Now when they found he was determined on travelling to Norway, they offered him all the assistance to his journey that he would accept from them. The king thanked them in many fine words for their good will; and said that he accepted from them, with no ordinary pleasure, what might be necessary for his undertaking.

203.—OF KING OLAF'S JOURNEY FROM RUSSIA.

Immediately after Yule (1030), King Olaf made himself ready; and had about 200 of his men with him. King Jarisleif gave him all the horses, and whatever else he required; and when he was ready he set off. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingegerd parted from him with all honour; and he left his son Magnus behind with the king. The first part of his journey, down to the sea-coast, King Olaf and his men made on the ice; but as spring approached, and the ice broke up, they rigged their vessels, and when they were ready and got a wind they set out to sea, and had a good voyage. When Olaf came to the island of Gotland with his ships he heard the news—which was told as truth, both in Svithjod, Denmark, and over all Norway—that Earl Hakon was missing, and Norway without a head. This gave the king and his men good hope of the issue of their journey. From thence they sailed, when the wind suited, to Svithjod, and went into the Mælar lake, to Aros, and sent men to the Swedish King Onund appointing a meeting. King Onund received his brother-in-law's message in the kindest manner,

and went to him according to his invitation. Astrid also came to King Olaf, with the men who had attended her; and great was the joy on all sides at this meeting. The Swedish king also received his brother-in-law King Olaf with great joy when they met.

204.—OF THE LENDERMEN IN NORWAY.

Now we must relate what, in the meantime, was going on in Norway. Thorer Hund, in these two winters (1029-1030), had made a Lapland journey, and each winter had been a long time on the mountains, and had gathered to himself great wealth by trading in various wares with the Laplanders. He had twelve large coats of reindeer-skin made for him, with so much Lapland witchcraft that no weapon could cut or pierce them any more than if they were armour of ring-mail, nor so much. The spring thereafter Thorer rigged a long-ship which belonged to him, and manned it with his house-servants. He summoned the bondes, demanded a levy from the most northern Thing district, collected in this way a great many people, and proceeded with this force southwards. Harek of Thjotta had also collected a great number of people; and in this expedition many people of consequence took a part, although these two were the most distinguished. They made it known publicly that with this war-force they were going against King Olaf, to defend the country against him, in case he should come from the eastward.

205.—OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer had most influence in the outer

part of the Throndhjem country after Earl Hakon's death was no longer doubtful; for he and his son Eindride appeared to be the nearest heirs to the movable property the earl had possessed. Then Einar remembered the promises and offers of friendship which King Canute had made him at parting; and he ordered a good vessel which belonged to him to be got ready, and embarked with a great retinue, and when he was ready sailed southwards along the coast, then set out to sea westwards, and sailed without stopping until he came to England. He immediately waited on King Canute, who received him well and joyfully. Then Einar opened his business to the king, and said he was come there to see the fulfilment of the promises the king had made him; namely, that he, Einar, should have the highest title of honour in Norway if Earl Hakon were no more. King Canute replies, that now the circumstances were altered. "I have now," said he, "sent men and tokens to my son Svein in Denmark, and promised him the kingdom of Norway; but thou shalt retain my friendship, and get the dignity and title which thou art entitled by birth to hold. Thou shalt be lenderman with great fiefs, and be so much more raised above other lendermen as thou art more able than they." Einar saw sufficiently how matters stood with regard to his business, and got ready to return home; but as he now knew the king's intentions, and thought it probable if King Olaf came from the East the country would not be very peaceable, it came into his mind that it would be better to proceed slowly, and not to be hastening his voyage, in order to fight against King Olaf, without his

being advanced by it to any higher dignity than he had before. Einar accordingly went to sea when he was ready; but only came to Norway after the events were ended which took place there during that summer.

206.—OF THE CHIEF PEOPLE IN NORWAY.

The chiefs in Norway had their spies east in Svithjod, and south in Denmark, to find out if King Olaf had come from Russia. As soon as these men could get across the country, they heard the news that King Olaf was arrived in Svithjod; and as soon as full certainty of this was obtained, the war message-token went round the land. The whole people were called out to a levy, and a great army was collected. The lendermen who were from Agder, Rogaland, and Hordaland, divided themselves, so that some went towards the north, and some towards the east; for they thought they required people on both sides. Erling's sons from Jadar went eastward, with all the men who lived east of them, and over whom they were chiefs; Aslak of Finey, and Erlend of Gerde, with the lendermen north of them, went towards the north. All those now named had sworn an oath to King Canute to deprive Olaf of life, if opportunity should offer.

207.—OF HARALD SIGURDSON'S PROCEEDINGS.

Now when it was reported in Norway that King Olaf was come from the East to Svithjod, his friends gathered together to give him aid. The most distinguished man in this flock was Harald Sigurdson, a brother of King Olaf, who then was fifteen years of age, very stout, and

manly of growth as if he were full-grown. Many other brave men were there also; and there were in all 600 men when they proceeded from the uplands, and went eastward with their force through Eid forest to Vermaland. From thence they went eastward through the forests to Svithjod and made inquiry about King Olaf's proceedings.

208.—OF KING OLAF'S PROCEEDINGS IN SVITHJOD.

King Olaf was in Svithjod in spring (1030), and had sent spies from thence to Norway. All accounts from that quarter agreed that there was no safety for him if he went there, and the people who came from the north dissuaded him much from penetrating into the country. But he had firmly resolved within himself, as before stated, to go into Norway; and he asked King Onund what strength King Onund would give him to conquer his kingdom. King Onund replied, that the Swedes were little inclined to make an expedition against Norway. "We know," says he, "that the Northmen are rough and warlike, and it is dangerous to carry hostility to their doors; but I will not be slow in telling thee what aid I can give. I will give thee 400 chosen men from my court-men, active and warlike, and well equipt for battle; and moreover will give thee leave to go through my country, and gather to thyself as many men as thou canst get to follow thee." King Olaf accepted this offer, and got ready for his march. Queen Astrid, and Ulfhild the king's daughter, remained behind in Svithjod.

209.—KING OLAF ADVANCES TO JARNBERALAND.

Just as King Olaf began his journey the men came to him whom the Swedish king had given, in all 400 men, and the king took the road the Swedes showed him. He advanced upwards in the country to the forests, and came to a district called Jarnberaland. Here the people joined him who had come out of Norway to meet him, as before related; and he met here his brother Harald, and many other of his relations, and it was a joyful meeting. They made out together 1200 men.

210.—OF DAG HRINGSON.

There was a man called Dag, who is said to have been a son of King Hring, who fled the country from King Olaf. This Hring, it is said further, had been a son of Dag, and grandson of Hring, Harald Harfager's son. Thus was Dag King Olaf's relative. Both Hring the father, and Dag the son, had settled themselves in Svithjod, and got land to rule over. In spring, when Olaf came from the East to Svithjod, he sent a message to his relation Dag, that he should join him in this expedition with all the force he could collect; and if they gained the country of Norway again, Dag should have no smaller part of the kingdom under him than his forefathers had enjoyed. When this message came to Dag it suited his inclination well, for he had a great desire to go to Norway and get the dominion his family had ruled over. He was not slow, therefore, to reply, and promised to come. Dag was a quick-speaking, quick-resolving man, mixing himself up in everything; eager, but of little understanding.

He collected a force of almost 1200 men, with which he joined King Olaf.

211.—OF KING OLAF'S JOURNEY.

King Olaf sent a message before him to all the inhabited places he passed through, that the men who wished to get goods and money, and share of booty, and the lands besides which now were in the hands of his enemies, should come to him, and follow him. Thereafter King Olaf led his army through forests, often over desert moors, and often over large lakes; and they dragged, or carried the boats, from lake to lake. On the way a great many followers joined the king, partly forest settlers, partly vagabonds. The places at which he halted for the night are since called Olaf's Booths. He proceeded without any break upon his journey until he came to Jamtaland, from which he marched north over the keel or ridge of the land. The men spread themselves over the hamlets, and proceeded, much scattered, so long as no enemy was expected; but always, when so dispersed, the Northmen accompanied the king. Dag proceeded with his men on another line of march, and the Swedes on a third with their troop.

212.—OF VAGABOND-MEN.

There were two men, the one called Gauka-Thorer, the other Afrafaste, who were vagabonds and great robbers, and had a company of thirty men such as themselves. These two men were larger and stronger than other men, and they wanted neither courage nor impudence. These men heard speak of the army that was crossing the coun-

try, and said among themselves it would be a clever counsel to go to the king, follow him to his country, and go with him into a regular battle, and try themselves in this work; for they had never been in any battle in which people were regularly drawn up in line, and they were curious to see the king's order of battle. This counsel was approved of by their comrades, and accordingly they went to the road on which King Olaf was to pass. When they came there they presented themselves to the king, with their followers, fully armed. They saluted him, and he asked what people they were. They told their names, and said they were natives of the place; and told their errand, and that they wished to go with the king. The king said, it appeared to him there was good help in such folks. "And I have a great inclination," said he, "to take such; but are ye Christian men?"

Gauka-Thorer replies, that he is neither Christian nor heathen. "I and my comrades have no faith but on ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well."

The king replies, "A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows did not believe in Christ their Creator."

Thorer replies, "Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?"

The king told them to let themselves be baptized, and to accept the true faith. "Follow me then, and I will advance you to great dignities; but if ye will not do so, return to your former vocation."

Afrafaste said he would not take on Christianity, and he turned away.

Then said Gauka-Thorer, "It is a great shame that the king drives us thus away from his army, and I never before came where I was not received into the company of other people, and I shall never return back on this account." They joined accordingly the rear with other forest-men, and followed the troops. Thereafter the king proceeded west up to the keel-ridge of the country.

213.—OF KING OLAF'S VISION.

Now when King Olaf, coming from the east, went over the keel-ridge and descended on the west side of the mountain, where it declines towards the sea, he could see from thence far over the country. Many people rode before the king and many after, and he himself rode so that there was a free space around him. He was silent, and nobody spoke to him, and thus he rode a great part of the day without looking much about him. Then the bishop rode up to him, asked him why he was so silent, and what he was thinking of; for, in general, he was very cheerful, and very talkative on a journey to his men, so that all who were near him were merry. The king replied, full of thought, "Wonderful things have come into my mind a while ago. As I just now looked over Norway, out to the west from the mountains, it came into my mind how many happy days I have had in that land. It appeared to me at first as if I saw over all the Throndhjem country, and then over all Norway; and the longer this vision was before my eyes the farther, methought, I

saw, until I looked over the whole wide world, both land and sea. Well I know the places at which I have been in former days; some even which I have only heard speak of, and some I saw of which I had never heard, both inhabited and uninhabited, in this wide world." The bishop replied that this was a holy vision, and very remarkable.

214.—OF THE MIRACLE ON THE CORN LAND.

When the king had come lower down on the mountain, there lay a farm before him called Sula, on the highest part of Veradal district; and as they came nearer to the house the corn-land appeared on both sides of the path. The king told his people to proceed carefully, and not destroy the corn to the bondes. The people observed this when the king was near; but the crowd behind paid no attention to it, and the people ran over the corn, so that it was trodden flat to the earth. There dwelt a bonde there called Thorgeir Flek, who had two sons nearly grown up. Thorgeir received the king and his people well, and offered all the assistance in his power. The king was pleased with his offer, and asked Thorgeir what was the news of the country, and if any forces were assembled against him. Thorgeir says that a great army was drawn together in the Throndhjem country, and that there were some lendermen both from the south of the country, and from Halogaland in the north; "but I do not know," says he, "if they are intended against you, or going elsewhere." Then he complained to the king of the damage and waste done him by the people breaking and treading down all his corn fields. The king said it was

ill done to bring upon him any loss. Then the king rode to where the corn had stood, and saw it was laid flat on the earth; and he rode round the field, and said, "I expect, bonde, that God will repair thy loss, so that the field, within a week, will be better;" and it proved the best of the corn, as the king had said. The king remained all night there, and in the morning he made himself ready, and told Thorgeir the bonde to accompany him and Thorgeir offered his two sons also for the journey; and although the king said that he did not want them with him, the lads would go. As they would not stay behind, the king's court-men were about binding them; but the king seeing it said, "Let them come with us: the lads will come safe back again." And it was with the lads as the king foretold.

215.—OF THE BAPTISM OF THE VAGABOND FOREST-MEN.

Thereafter the army advanced to Staf, and when the king reached Staf's moor he halted. There he got the certain information that the bondes were advancing with an army against him, and that he might soon expect to have a battle with them. He mustered his force here, and, after reckoning them up, found there were in the army 900 heathen men, and when he came to know it he ordered them to allow themselves to be baptized, saying that he would have no heathens with him in battle. "We must not," says he, "put our confidence in numbers, but in God alone must we trust; for through his power and favour we must be victorious, and I will not mix heathen people with my own." When the heathens heard this,

they held a council among themselves, and at last 400 men agreed to be baptized; but 500 men refused to adopt Christianity, and that body returned home to their land. Then the brothers Gauka-Thorer and Afrafaste presented themselves to the king, and offered again to follow him. The king asked if they had now taken baptism. Gauka-Thorer replied that they had not. Then the king ordered them to accept baptism and the true faith, or otherwise to go away. They stepped aside to talk with each other on what resolution they should take. Afrafaste said, "To give my opinion, I will not turn back, but go into the battle, and take a part on the one side or the other; and I don't care much in which army I am." Gauka-Thorer replies, "If I go into battle I will give my help to the king, for he has most need of help. And if I must believe in a God, why not in the white Christ as well as in any other? Now it is my advice, therefore, that we let ourselves be baptized, since the king insists so much upon it, and then go into the battle with him." They all agreed to this, and went to the king, and said they would receive baptism. Then they were baptized by a priest, and the baptism was confirmed by the bishop. The king then took them into the troop of his court-men, and said they should fight under his banner in the battle.

216.—KING OLAF'S SPEECH.

King Olaf got certain intelligence now that it would be but a short time until he had a battle with the bondes; and after he had mustered his men, and reckoned up the force, he had more than 3000 men, which appears to be

a great army in one field. Then the king made the following speech to the people: "We have a great army, and excellent troops; and now I will tell you, my men, how I will have our force drawn up. I will let my banner go forward in the middle of the army, and my-court-men, and pursuivants shall follow it, together with the war forces that joined us from the Uplands, and also those who may come to us here in the Throndhjem land. On the right hand of my banner shall be Dag Hringson, with all the men he brought to our aid; and he shall have the second banner. And on the left hand of our line shall the men be whom the Swedish king gave us, together with all the people who came to us in Sweden; and they shall have the third banner. I will also have the people divide themselves into distinct flocks or parcels, so that relations and acquaintances should be together; for thus they defend each other best, and know each other. We will have all our men distinguished by a mark, so as to be a field-token upon their helmets and shields, by painting the holy cross thereupon with white colour. When we come into battle we shall all have one countersign and field-cry, —'Forward, forward, Christian men! cross men! king's men!' We must draw up our men in thinner ranks, because we have fewer people, and I do not wish to let them surround us with their men. Now let the men divide themselves into separate flocks, and then each flock into ranks; then let each man observe well his proper place, and take notice what banner he is drawn up under. And now we shall remain drawn up in array; and our men shall be fully armed, night and day, until we know where

the meeting shall be between us and the bondes." When the king had finished speaking, the army arrayed, and arranged itself according to the king's orders.

217.—KING OLAF'S COUNSEL.

Thereafter the king had a meeting with the chiefs of the different divisions, and then the men had returned whom the king had sent out into the neighbouring districts to demand men from the bondes. They brought the tidings from the inhabited places they had gone through, that all around the country was stripped of all men able to carry arms, as all the people had joined the bondes' army; and where they did find any they got but few to follow them, for the most of them answered that they stayed at home because they would not follow either party: they would not go out against the king, nor yet against their own relations. Thus they had got but few people. Now the king asked his men their counsel, and what they now should do. Fin Arnason answered thus to the king's question: "I will say what should be done, if I may advise. We should go with armed hand over all the inhabited places, plunder all the goods, and burn all the habitations, and leave not a hut standing, and thus punish the bondes for their treason against their sovereign. I think many a man will then cast himself loose from the bondes' army, when he sees smoke and flame at home on his farm, and does not know how it is going with children, wives, or old men, fathers, mothers, and other connections. I expect also," he added, "that if we succeed in breaking the assembled host, their ranks will soon

be thinned; for so it is with the bondes, that the counsel which is the newest is always the dearest to them all, and most followed." When Fin had ended his speech it met with general applause; for many thought well of such a good occasion to make booty, and all thought the bondes well deserved to suffer damage; and they also thought it probable, what Fin said, that many would in this way be brought to forsake the assembled army of the bondes.

Now when the king heard the warm expressions of his people he told them to listen to him, and said, "The bondes have well deserved that it should be done to them as ye desire. They also know that I have formerly done so, burning their habitations, and punishing them severely in many ways; but then I proceeded against them with fire and sword because they rejected the true faith, betook themselves to sacrifices, and would not obey my commands. We had then God's honour to defend. But this treason against their sovereign is a much less grievous crime, although it does not become men who have any manhood in them to break the faith and vows they have sworn to me. Now, however, it is more in my power to spare those who have dealt ill with me, than those whom God hated. I will, therefore, that my people proceed gently, and commit no ravage. First, I will proceed to meet the bondes: if we can then come to a reconciliation, it is well; but if they will fight with us, then there are two things before us; either we fail in the battle, and then it will be well advised not to have to retire encumbered with spoil and cattle; or we gain the victory, and then ye will be the heirs of all who fight now against us; for some will

fall, and others will fly, but both will have forfeited their goods and properties, and then it will be good to enter into full houses and well-stocked farms; but what is burnt is of use to no man, and with pillage and force more is wasted than what turns to use. Now we will spread out far through the inhabited places, and take with us all the men we can find able to carry arms. Then men will also capture cattle for slaughter, or whatever else of provision that can serve for food; but not do any other ravage. But I will see willingly that ye kill any spies of the bonde army ye may fall in with. Dag and his people shall go by the north side down along the valley, and I will go on along the country road, and so we shall meet in the evening, and all have one night quarter."

218.—OF KING OLAF'S SKALDS.

It is related that when King Olaf drew up his men in battle order, he made a shield rampart with his troop that should defend him in battle, for which he selected the strongest and boldest. Thereafter he called his skalds, and ordered them to go in within the shield defence. "Ye shall," says the king, "remain here, and see the circumstances which may take place, and then ye will not have to follow the reports of others in what ye afterwards tell or sing concerning it." There were Thormod Kolbrunarskald, Gissur Gulbraskald, a foster-son of Hofgardaref, and Thorfin Mun. Then said Thormod to Gissur, "Let us not stand so close together, brother, that Sigvat the skald should not find room when he comes. He must stand before the king, and the king will not have it other-

wise." The king heard this, and said, "Ye need not sneer at Sigvat, because he is not here. Often has he followed me well, and now he is praying for us, and that we greatly need." Thormod replies, "It may be, sire, that ye now require prayers most; but it would be thin around the banner-staff if all thy court-men were now on the way to Rome. True it was what we spoke about, that no man who would speak with you could find room for Sigvat."

Thereafter the skalds talked among themselves that it would be well to compose a few songs of remembrance about the events which would soon be taking place.

Then Gissur sang:—

"From me shall bonde girl never hear
A thought of sorrow, care, or fear:
I wish my girl knew how gay
We arm us for our viking fray.
Many and brave they are, we know,
Who come against us there below;
But, life or death, we, one and all,
By Norway's king will stand or fall."

And Thorfin Mun made another song, viz.:—

"Dark is the cloud of men and shields,
Slow moving up through Verdal's fields:
These Verdal folks presume to bring
Their armed force against their king.
On! let us feed the carrion crow,—
Give her a feast in every blow;
And, above all, let Throndhjem's hordes
Feel the sharp edge of true men's swords."

And Thormod sang:—

"The whistling arrows pipe to battle,
Sword and shield their war-call rattle.
Up! brave men, up! the faint heart here
Finds courage when the danger's near.
Up! brave men, up! with Olaf on!
With heart and hand a field is won.
One viking cheer!—then, stead of words,
We'll speak with our death-dealing swords."

These songs were immediately got by heart by the army.

219.—OF KING OLAF'S GIFTS FOR THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO SHOULD BE SLAIN.

Thereafter the king made himself ready, and marched

down through the valley. His whole forces took up their night-quarter in one place, and lay down all night under their shields; but as soon as day broke the king again put his army in order, and that being done they proceeded down through the valley. Many bondes then came to the king, of whom the most joined his army; and all, as one man, told the same tale,—that the lendermen had collected an enormous army, with which they intended to give battle to the king.

The king took many marks of silver, and delivered them into the hands of a bonde, and said, "This money thou shalt conceal, and afterwards lay out,—some to churches, some to priests, some to alms-men,—as gifts for the life and souls of those who fight against us, and may fall in battle."

The bonde replies, "Should you not rather give this money for the soul-mulct of your own men?"

The king says, "This money shall be given for the souls of those who stand against us in the ranks of the bondes' army, and fall by the weapons of our own men. The men who follow us to battle, and fall therein, will all be saved together with ourself."

220.—OF THORMOD KOLBRUNARSKALD.

This night the king lay with his army around him on the field, as before related, and lay long awake in prayer to God, and slept but little. Towards morning a slumber fell on him, and when he awoke daylight was shooting up. The king thought it too early to awaken the army, and asked where Thormod the skald was. Thormod was

at hand, and asked what was the king's pleasure. "Sing us a song," said the king. Thormod raised himself up, and sang so loud that the whole army could hear him. He began to sing the old Bjarkamal, of which these are the first verses:—

"The day is breaking,—
The house cock, shaking
His rustling wings,
While priest-bell rings,
Crows up the morn,
And touting horn
Wakes thralls to work and weep;
Ye sons of Adil, cast off sleep!
Wake up! wake up?
Nor wassail cup,
Nor maiden's jeer,
Awaits you here.
Hrolf of the bow!
Har of the blow!
Up in your might! the day is breaking;
'Tis Hild's game[1] that bides your waking."

Then the troops awoke, and when the song was ended the people thanked him for it; and it pleased many, as it was suitable to the time and occasion, and they called it the house-carle's whet. The king thanked him for the pleasure, and took a gold ring that weighed half a mark and gave it him. Thormod thanked the king for the gift, and said, "We have a good king; but it is not easy to say how long the king's life may be. It is my prayer, sire, that thou shouldst never part from me either in life or death." The king replies, "We shall all go together so long as I rule, and as ye will follow me."

Thormod says, "I hope, sire, that whether in safety or danger I may stand near you as long as I can stand, whatever we may hear of Sigvat travelling with his gold-hilted sword." Then Thormod made these lines:—

"To thee, my king, I'll still be true,
Until another skald I view,
Here in the field with golden sword,
As in thy hall, with flattering word.
Thy skald shall never be a craven,
Though he may feast the croaking raven.
The warrior's fate unmoved I view,—
To thee, my king, I'll still be true."

[1]Hild's game is the battle,—from the name of the war-goddess Hild.—L.

221.—KING OLAF COMES TO STIKLESTAD.

King Olaf led his army farther down through the valley, and Dag and his men went another way, and the king did not halt until he came to Stiklestad. There he saw the bonde army spread out all around; and there were so great numbers that people were going on every footpath, and great crowds were collected far and near. They also saw there a troop which came down from Veradal, and had been out to spy. They came so close to the king's people that they knew each other. It was Hrut of Viggia, with thirty men. The king ordered his pursuivants to go out against Hrut, and make an end of him, to which his men were instantly ready. The king said to the Icelanders, "It is told me that in Iceland it is the custom that the bondes give their house-servants a sheep to slaughter; now I give you a ram to slaughter.[1] The Icelanders were easily invited to this, and went out immediately with a few men against Hrut, and killed him and the troop that followed him. When the king came to Stiklestad he made a halt, and made the army stop, and told his people to alight from their horses and get ready for battle; and the people did as the king ordered. Then he placed his army in battle array, and raised his banner. Dag was not yet arrived with his men, so that his wing of the battle array was wanting. Then the king said the Upland men should go forward in their place, and raise their banner there. "It appears to me advisable," says the king, "that Harald my brother should not be in the battle, for he is still in the years of childhood only." Harald

[1]Hrut means a young ram.—L.

replies, "Certainly I shall be in the battle, for I am not so weak that I cannot handle the sword; and as to that, I have a notion of tying the sword-handle to my hand. None is more willing than I am to give the bondes a blow; so I shall go with my comrades." It is said that Harald made these lines:—

"Our army's wing, where I shall stand,
I will hold good with heart and hand;
My mother's eye shall joy to see
A battered, blood-stained shield from me.
The brisk young skald should gaily go
Into the fray, give blow for blow,
Cheer on his men, gain inch by inch,
And from the spear-point never flinch."

Harald got his will, and was allowed to be in the battle.

222.—OF THORGILS HALMASON.

A bonde, by name Thorgils Halmason, father to Grim the Good, dwelt in Stiklestad farm. Thorgils offered the king his assistance, and was ready to go into battle with him. The king thanked him for the offer. "I would rather," says the king, "thou shouldst not be in the fight. Do us rather the service to take care of the people who are wounded, and to bury those who may fall, when the battle is over. Should it happen, bonde, that I fall in this battle, bestow the care on my body that may be necessary, if that be not forbidden thee." Thorgils promised the king what he desired.

223.—OLAF'S SPEECH.

Now when King Olaf had drawn up his army in battle array he made a speech, in which he told the people to raise their spirit, and go boldly forward, if it came to a battle. "We have," says he, "many men, and good; and

although the bondes may have a somewhat larger force than we, it is fate that rules over victory. This I will make known to you solemnly, that I shall not fly from this battle, but shall either be victorious over the bondes, or fall in the fight. I will pray to God that the lot of the two may befall me which will be most to my advantage. With this we may encourage ourselves, that we have a more just cause than the bondes; and likewise that God must either protect us and our cause in this battle, or give us a far higher recompense for what we may lose here in the world than what we ourselves could ask. Should it be my lot to have anything to say after the battle, then shall I reward each of you according to his service, and to the bravery he displays in the battle; and if we gain the victory, there must be land and movables enough to divide among you, and which are now in the hands of your enemies. Let us at the first make the hardest onset, for then the consequences are soon seen. There being a great difference in the numbers, we have to expect victory from a sharp assault only; and, on the other hand, it will be heavy work for us to fight until we are tired, and unable to fight longer; for we have fewer people to relieve with than they, who can come forward at one time and retreat and rest at another. But if we advance so hard at the first attack that those who are foremost in their ranks must turn round, then the one will fall over the other, and their destruction will be the greater the greater numbers there are together." When the king had ended his speech it was received with loud applause, and the one encouraged the other.

224.—OF THORD FOLASON.

Thord Folason carried King Olaf's banner. So says Sigvat the skald, in the death-song which he composed about King Olaf, and put together according to resurrection saga:—

"Thord, I have heard, by Olaf's side,
Where raged the battle's wildest tide,
Moved on, and, as by one accord
Moved with them every heart and sword.
The banner of the king on high,
Floating all splendid in the sky
From golden shaft, aloft he bore,—
The Norsemen's rallying-point of yore."

225.—OF KING OLAF'S ARMOUR.

King Olaf was armed thus:—He had a gold-mounted helmet on his head, and had in one hand a white shield, on which the holy cross was inlaid in gold. In his other hand he had a lance, which to the present day stands beside the altar in Christ Chuch. In his belt he had a sword, which was called Hneiter, which was remarkably sharp, and of which the handle was worked with gold. He had also a strong coat of ring-mail. Sigvat the skald, speaks of this:—

"A greater victory to gain,
Olaf the Stout strode o'er the plain
In strong chain armour, aid to bring
To his brave men on either wing.
High rose the fight and battle-heat,—
The clear blood ran beneath the feet
Of Swedes, who from the East came there,
In Olaf's gain or loss to share."

226.—KING OLAF'S DREAM.

Now when King Olaf had drawn up his men the army of the bondes had not yet come near upon any quarter, so the king said the people should sit down and rest themselves. He sat down himself, and the people sat around him in a widespread crowd. He leaned down,

and laid his head upon Fin Arnason's knee. There a slumber came upon him, and he slept a little while; but at the same time the bondes' army was seen advancing with raised banners, and the multitude of these was very great.

Then Fin awakened the king, and said that the bonde-army advanced against them.

The king awoke, and said, "Why did you waken me, Fin, and did not allow me to enjoy my dream?"

Fin: "Thou must not be dreaming; but rather thou shouldst be awake, and preparing thyself against the host which is coming down upon us; or, dost thou not see that the whole bonde-crowd is coming?"

The king replies, "They are not yet so near to us, and it would have been better to have let me sleep."

Then said Fin, "What was the dream, sire, of which the loss appears to thee so great that thou wouldst rather have been left to waken of thyself?"

Now the king told his dream,—that he seemed to see a high ladder, upon which he went so high in the air that heaven was open: for so high reached the ladder. "And when you awoke me, I was come to the highest step towards heaven."

Fin replies, "This dream does not appear to me so good as it does to thee. I think it means that thou art fey;[1] unless it be the mere want of sleep that has worked upon thee."

227.—OF ARNLJOT GELLINE'S BAPTISM.

When King Olaf was arrived at Stiklestad, it hap-

[1]Fey means doomed to die.

pened, among other circumstances, that a man came to him; and although it was nowise wonderful that there came many men from the districts, yet this must be regarded as unusual, that this man did not appear like the other men who came to him. He was so tall that none stood higher than up to his shoulders: very handsome he was in countenance, and had beautiful fair hair. He was well armed; had a fine helmet, and ring armour; a red shield; a superb sword in his belt; and in his hand a gold-mounted spear, the shaft of it so thick that it was a handful to grasp. The man went before the king, saluted him, and asked if the king would accept his services.

The king asked his name and family, also what countryman he was.

He replies, "My family is in Jamtaland and Helsingjaland, and my name is Arnljot Gelline; but this I must not forget to tell you, that I came to the assistance of those men you sent to Jamtaland to collect scat, and I gave into their hands a silver dish, which I sent you as a token that I would be your friend."

Then the king asked Arnljot if he was a Christian or not.

He replied, "My faith has been this, to rely upon my power and strength, and which faith hath hitherto given me satisfaction; but now I intend rather to put my faith, sire, in thee."

The king replies, "If thou wilt put faith in me thou must also put faith in what I will teach thee. Thou must believe that Jesus Christ has made heaven and earth, and

all mankind, and to him shall all those who are good and rightly believing go after death."

Arnljot answers, "I have indeed heard of the white Christ, but neither know what he proposes, nor what he rules over; but now I will believe all that thou sayest to me, and lay down my lot in your hands."

Thereupon Arnljot was baptized. The king taught him so much of the holy faith as appeared to him needful, and placed him in the front rank of the order of battle, in advance of his banner, where also Gauka-Thorer and Afrafaste, with their men, were.

228.—CONCERNING THE ARMY COLLECTED IN NORWAY.

Now shall we relate what we have left behind in our tale,—that the lendermen and bondes had collected a vast host as soon as it was reported that King Olaf was come from Russia, and had arrived in Svithjod; but when they heard that he had come to Jamtaland, and intended to proceed westwards over the keel-ridge to Veradal, they brought their forces into the Throndhjem country, where they gathered together the whole people, free and unfree, and proceeded towards Veradal with so great a body of men that there was nobody in Norway at that time who had seen so large a force assembled. But the force, as it usually happens in so great a multitude, consisted of many different sorts of people. There were many lendermen, and a great many powerful bondes; but the great mass consisted of labourers and cottars. The chief strength of this army lay in the Throndhjem land, and it was the most warm in enmity and opposition to the king.

229.—OF BISHOP SIGURD.

When King Canute had, as before related, laid all Norway under his power, he set Earl Hakon to manage it, and gave the earl a court-bishop, by name Sigurd, who was of Danish descent, and had been long with King Canute. This bishop was of a very hot temper, and particularly obstinate, and haughty in his speech; but supported King Canute all he could in conversation, and was a great enemy of King Olaf. He was now also in the bondes' army, spoke often before the people, and urged them much to insurrection against King Olaf.

230.—BISHOP SIGURD'S SPEECH.

At a House-thing, at which a great many people were assembled, the bishop desired to be heard, and made the following speech: "Here are now assembled a great many men, so that probably there will never be opportunity in this poor country of seeing so great a native army; but it would be desirable if this strength and multitude could be a protection; for it will all be needed, if this Olaf does not give over bringing war and strife upon you. From his very earliest youth he has been accustomed to plunder and kill: for which purposes he drove widely around through all countries, until he turned at last against this, where he began to show hostilities against the men who were the best and most powerful; and even against King Canute, whom all are bound to serve according to their ability, and in whose scat-lands he set himself down. He did the same to Olaf the Swedish king. He

drove the earls Svein and Hakon away from their heritages; and was even most tyrannical towards his own connections, as he drove all the kings out of the Uplands: although, indeed, it was but just reward for having been false to their oaths of fealty to King Canute, and having followed this King Olaf in all the folly he could invent; so their friendship ended according to their deserts, by this king mutilating some of them, taking their kingdoms himself, and ruining every man in the country who had an honourable name. Ye know yourselves how he has treated the lendermen, of whom many of the worthiest have been murdered, and many obliged to fly from their country; and how he has roamed far and wide through the land with robber-bands, burning and plundering houses, and killing people. Who is the man among us here of any consideration who has not some great injury from him to avenge? Now he has come hither with a foreign troop, consisting mostly of forest-men, vagabonds, and such marauders. Do ye think he will now be more merciful to you, when he is roaming about with such a bad crew, after committing devastations which all who followed him dissuaded him from? Therefore it is now my advice, that ye remember King Canute's words when he told you, if King Olaf attempted to return to the country ye should defend the liberty King Canute had promised you, and should oppose and drive away such a vile pack. Now the only thing to be done is to advance against them, and cast forth these malefactors to the wolves and eagles, leaving their corpses on the spot they cover, unless ye drag them aside to out-of-the-way cor-

ners in the woods or rocks. No man would be so imprudent as to remove them to churches, for they are all robbers and evil-doers." When he had ended his speech it was hailed with the loudest applause, and all unanimously agreed to act according to his recommendation.

231.—OF THE LENDERMEN.

The lendermen who had come together appointed meetings with each other, and consulted together how they should draw up their troops, and who should be their leader. Kalf Arnason said that Harek of Thjotta was best fitted to be the chief of this army, for he was descended from Harald Harfager's race. "The king also is particularly enraged against him on account of the murder of Grankel, and therefore he would be exposed to the severest fate if Olaf recovered the kingdom; and Harek withal is a man experienced in battles, and a man who does much for honour alone."

Harek replies, that the men are best suited for this who are in the flower of their age. "I am now," says he, "an old and decaying man, not able to do much in battle: besides, there is near relationship between me and King Olaf; and although he seems not to put great value upon that tie, it would not beseem me to go as leader of the hostilities against him, before any other in this meeting. On the other hand, thou, Thorer, art well suited to be our chief in this battle against King Olaf; and thou hast distinct grounds for being so, both because thou hast to avenge the death of thy relation, and also hast been driven by him as an outlaw from thy property. Thou hast also

promised King Canute, as well as thy connections, to avenge the murder of thy relative Asbjorn; and dost thou suppose there ever will be a better opportunity than this of taking vengeance on Olaf for all these insults and injuries?"

Thorer replies thus to his speech: "I do not confide in myself so much as to raise the banner against King Olaf, or, as chief, to lead on this army; for the people of Throndhjem have the greatest part in this armament, and I know well their haughty spirit, and that they would not obey me, or any other Halogaland man, although I need not be reminded of my injuries to be roused to vengeance on King Olaf. I remember well my heavy loss when King Olaf slew four men, all distinguished both by birth and personal qualities; namely, my brother's son Asbjorn, my sister's sons Thorer and Grjotgard, and their father Olver; and it is my duty to take vengeance for each man of them. I will not conceal that I have selected eleven of my house-servants for that purpose, and of those who are the most daring; and I do not think we shall be behind others in exchanging blows with King Olaf, should opportunity be given."

232.—KALF ARNASON'S SPEECH.

Then Kalf Arnason desired to speak. "It is highly necessary," says he, "that this business we have on hand do not turn out a mockery and child-work, now that an army is collected. Something else is needful, if we are to stand battle with King Olaf, than that each should shove the danger from himself; for we must recollect that

although King Olaf has not many people compared to this army of ours, the leader of them is intrepid, and the whole body of them will be true to him, and obedient in the battle. But if we who should be the leaders of this army show any fear, and will not encourage the army and go at the head of it, it must happen that with the great body of our people the spirit will leave their hearts, and the next thing will be that each will seek his own safety. Although we have now a great force assembled, we shall find our destruction certain, when we meet King Olaf and his troops, if we, the chiefs of the people, are not confident in our cause, and have not the whole army confidently and bravely going along with us. If it cannot be so, we had better not risk a battle; and then it is easy to see that nothing would be left us but to shelter ourselves under King Olaf's mercy, however hard it might be, as then we would be less guilty than we now may appear to him to be. Yet I know there are men in his ranks who would secure my life and peace if I would seek it. Will ye now adopt my proposal—then shalt thou, friend Thorer, and thou, Harek, go under the banner which we will all of us raise up, and then follow. Let us all be speedy and determined in the resolution we have taken, and put ourselves so at the head of the bondes' army that they see no distrust in us; for then will the common man advance with spirit when we go merrily to work in placing the army in battle-order, and in encouraging the people to the strife."

When Kalf had ended they all concurred in what he proposed, and all would do what Kalf thought of advan-

tage. All desired Kalf to be the leader of the army, and to give each what place in it he chose.

233.—HOW THE LENDERMEN SET UP THEIR BANNERS.

Kalf Arnason then raised his banner, and drew up his house-servants along with Harek of Thjotta and his men. Thorer Hund, with his troop, was at the head of the order of battle in front of the banner; and on both sides of Thorer was a chosen body of bondes, all of them the most active and best armed in the forces. This part of the array was long and thick, and in it were drawn up the Throndhjem people and the Halogalanders. On the right wing was another array; and on the left of the main array were drawn up the men from Rogaland, Hordaland, the Fjord districts, and Sogn, and they had the third banner.

234.—OF THORSTEIN KNARRARSMID.

There was a man called Thorstein Knarrarsmid, who was a merchant and master ship-carpenter, stout and strong, very passionate, and a great manslayer. He had been in enmity against King Olaf, who had taken from him a new and large merchant-vessel he had built, on account of some manslaughter-mulct, incurred in the course of his misdeeds, which he owed to the king. Thorstein, who was with the bondes' army, went forward in front of the line in which Thorer Hund stood, and said, "Here I will be, Thorer, in your ranks; for I think, if I and King Olaf meet, to be the first to drive a weapon at him, if I can get so near, to repay him for the robbery of

the ship he took from me, which was the best that ever went on merchant voyage." Thorer and his men received Thorstein, and he went into their ranks.

235.—OF THE PREPARATIONS OF THE BONDES.

When the bondes' men and array were drawn up the lendermen addressed the men, and ordered them to take notice of the place to which each man belonged, under which banner each should be, who there were in front of the banner, who were his side-men, and that they should be brisk and quick in taking up their places in the array; for the army had still to go a long way, and the array might be broken in the course of march. Then they encouraged the people; and Kalf invited all the men who had any injury to avenge on King Olaf to place themselves under the banner which was advancing against King Olaf's own banner. They should remember the distress he had brought upon them; and, he said, never was there a better opportunity to avenge their grievances, and to free themselves from the yoke and slavery he had imposed on them. "Let him," says he, "be held a useless coward who does not fight this day boldly: and they are not innocents who are opposed to you, but people who will not spare you if ye spare them."

Kalf's speech was received with loud applause, and shouts of encouragement were heard through the whole army.

236.—OF THE KING'S AND THE BONDES' ARMIES.

Thereafter the bondes' army advanced to Stiklestad,

where King Olaf was already with his people. Kalf and Harek went in front, at the head of the army under their banners. But the battle did not begin immediately on their meeting; for the bondes delayed the assault, because all their men were not come upon the plain, and they waited for those who came after them. Thorer Hund had come up with his troop the last, for he had to take care that the men did not go off behind when the battle-cry was raised, or the armies were closing with each other; and therefore Kalf and Harek waited for Thorer. For the encouragement of their men in the battle the bondes had the field-cry—"Forward, forward, bondemen!" King Olaf also made no attack, for he waited for Dag and the people who followed him. At last the king saw Dag and his men approaching. It is said that the army of the bondes was not less on this day than a hundred times a hundred men. Sigvat the skald speaks thus of the numbers:—

"I grieve to think the king had brought
Too small a force for what he sought:
He held his gold too fast to bring
The numbers that could make him king.
The foemen, more than two to one,
The victory by numbers won;
And this alone, as I've heard say,
Against King Olaf turned the day."

237.—MEETING OF THE KING AND THE BONDES.

As the armies on both sides stood so near that people knew each other, the king said, "Why art thou here, Kalf, for we parted good friends south in More? It beseems thee ill to fight against us, or to throw a spear into our army; for here are four of thy brothers."

Kalf replied, "Many things come to pass differently

from what may appear seemly. You parted from us so that it was necessary to seek peace with those who were behind in the country. Now each must remain where he stands; but if I might advise, we should be reconciled."

Then Fin, his brother, answered, "This is to be observed of Kalf, that when he speaks fairly he has it in his mind to do ill."

The king answered, "It may be, Kalf, that thou art inclined to reconciliation; but, methinks, the bondes do not appear so peaceful."

Then Thorgeir of Kviststad said, "You shall now have such peace as many formerly have received at your hands, and which you shall now pay for."

The king replies, "Thou hast no occasion to hasten so much to meet us; for fate has not decreed to thee to-day a victory over me, who raised thee to power and dignity from a mean station."

238.—BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD.

Now came Thorer Hund, went forward in front of the banner with his troop, and called out, "Forward, forward, bondemen!" Thereupon the bondemen raised the war-cry, and shot their arrows and spears. The king's men raised also a war-shout; and that done, encouraged each other to advance, crying out, "Forward, forward, Christ-men! cross-men! king's men!" When the bondes who stood outermost on the wings heard it, they repeated the same cry; but when the other bondes heard them they thought these were king's men, turned their arms against them, and they fought together, and many were slain

before they knew each other. The weather was beautiful, and the sun shone clear; but when the battle began the heaven and the sun became red, and before the battle ended it became as dark as at night. King Olaf had drawn up his army upon a rising ground, and it rushed down from thence upon the bonde-army with such a fierce assault, that the bondes' array went before it; so that the breast of the king's array came to stand upon the ground on which the rear of the bondes' array had stood, and many of the bondes' army were on the way to fly, but the lendermen and their house-men stood fast, and the battle became very severe. So says Sigvat:—

"Thundered the ground beneath their tread,
As, iron-clad, thick-tramping, sped
The men-at-arms, in row and rank,
Past Stiklestad's sweet grassy bank.
The clank of steel, the bowstrings' twang,
The sounds of battle, loudly rang;
And bowmen hurried on advancing,
Their bright helms in the sunshine glancing."

The lendermen urged their men, and forced them to advance. Sigvat speaks of this:—

"Midst in their line their banner flies,
Thither the stoutest bonde hies:
But many a bonde thinks of home,
And many wish they ne'er had come."

Then the bonde-army pushed on from all quarters. They who stood in front hewed down with their swords; they who stood next thrust with their spears; and they who stood hindmost shot arrows, cast spears, or threw stones, hand-axes, or sharp stakes. Soon there was a great fall of men in the battle. Many were down on both sides. In the first onset fell Arnljot Gelline, Gauka-Thorer, and Afrafaste, with all their men, after each had killed a man or two, and some indeed more. Now the ranks in front of the king's banner began to be thinned,

and the king ordered Thord to carry the banner forward, and the king himself followed it with the troop he had chosen to stand nearest to him in battle; and these were the best armed men in the field, and the most expert in the use of their weapons. Sigvat the skald tells of this:—

"Loud was the battle-storm there,
Where the king's banner flamed in air.
The king beneath his banner stands,
And there the battle he commands."

Olaf came forth from behind the shield-bulwark, and put himself at the head of the array; and when the bondes looked him in the face they were frightened, and let their hands drop. So says Sigvat:—

"I think I saw them shrink with fear
Who would not shrink from foeman's spear,
When Olaf's lion-eye was cast
On them, and called up all the past.
Clear as the serpent's eye—his look
No Thorndhjem man could stand, but shook
Beneath its glance, and skulked away,
Knowing his king, and cursed the day."

The combat became fierce, and the king went forward in the fray. So says Sigvat:—

"When on they came in fierce array,
And round the king arose the fray,
With shield on arm brave Olaf stood,
Dyeing his sword in their best blood.
For vengeance on his Throndhjem foes,
On their best men he dealt his blows:
He who knew well death's iron play,
To his deep vengeance gave full sway."

239.—THORGEIR OF KVISTSTAD'S FALL.

King Olaf fought most desperately. He struck the lenderman before mentioned (Thorgeir of Kviststad) across the face, cut off the nose-piece of his helmet, and clove his head down below the eyes so that they almost fell out. When he fell the king said, "Was it not true, Thorgeir, what I told thee, that thou shouldst not be victor in our meeting?" At the same instant Thord stuck

the banner-pole so fast in the earth that it remained standing. Thord had got his death-wound, and fell beneath the banner. There also fell Thorfin Mun, and also Gissur Gullbrarskald, who was attacked by two men, of whom he killed one, but only wounded the other before he fell. So says Hofgardaref:—

"Bold in the iron-storm was he,
Firm and stout as forest tree,
The hero who, 'gainst two at once,
Made Odin's fire from sword-edge glance;
Dealing a death-blow to the one,
Known as a brave and generous man,
Wounding the other, ere he fell,—
His bloody sword his deeds showed well."

It happened then, as before related, that the sun, although the air was clear, withdrew from the sight, and it became dark. Of this Sigvat the skald speaks:—

"No common wonder in the sky
Fell out that day—the sun on high,
And not a cloud to see around,
Shone not, nor warmed Norway's ground.
The day on which fell out this fight
Was marked by dismal dusky light.
This from the East I heard—the end
Of our great king it did portend."

At the same time Dag Hringson came up with his people, and began to put his men in array, and to set up his banner; but on account of the darkness the onset could not go on so briskly, for they could not see exactly whom they had before them. They turned, however, to that quarter where the men of Hordaland and Rogaland stood. Many of these circumstances took place at the same time, and some happened a little earlier, and some a little later.

240.—KING OLAF'S FALL.

On the one side of Kalf Arnason stood his two relations, Olaf and Kalf, with many other brave and stout men. Kalf was a son of Arnfin Arnmodson, and a brother's son of Arne Arnmodson. On the other side of Kalf Arnason stood Thorer Hund. King Olaf hewed at

Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat. So says Sigvat:—

"The king himself now proved the power
Of Fin-folk's craft in magic hour,
With magic song; for stroke of steel
Thor's reindeer coat would never feel.
Bewitched by them it turned the stroke
Of the king's sword,—a dust-like smoke
Rose from Thor's shoulders from the blow
Which the king thought would end his foe."

Thorer struck at the king, and they exchanged some blows; but the king's sword would not cut where it met the reindeer skin, although Thorer was wounded in the hands. Sigvat sang thus of it:—

"Some say that Thorer's not right bold;
Why never yet have I been told
Of one who did a bolder thing
Than to change blows with his true king.
Against his king his sword to wield,
Leaping across the shield on shield
Which fenced the king round in the fight,
Shows the dog's[1] courage—brave, not bright."

The king said to Bjorn the marshal, "Do thou kill the dog on whom steel will not bite." Bjorn turned round the axe in his hands, and gave Thorer a blow with the hammer of it on the shoulder so hard that he tottered. The king at the same moment turned against Kalf and his relations, and gave Olaf his death-wound. Thorer Hund struck his spear right through the body of Marshal Bjorn, and killed him outright; and Thorer said, "It is thus we hunt the bear."[2] Thorstein Knarrarsmid struck at King Olaf with his axe, and the blow hit his left leg above the knee. Fin Arnason instantly killed Thorstein. The king after the wound staggered towards a stone, threw down his sword, and prayed God to help him. Then

[1]Thorer's name was Hund—the dog; and a play upon Thorer Hund's name was intended by the skald.—L.

[2]Bjorn, the marshal's name, signifies a bear.—L.

Thorer Hund struck at him with his spear, and the stroke went in under his mail-coat and into his belly. Then Kalf struck at him on the left side of the neck. But all are not agreed upon Kalf having been the man who gave him the wound in the neck. These three wounds were King Olaf's death; and after the king's death the greater part of the forces which had advanced with him fell with the king. Bjarne Gullbrarskald sang these verses about Kalf Arnason:—

"Warrior! who Olaf dared withstand,
Who against Olaf held the land,
Thou hast withstood the bravest, best,
Who e'er has gone to his long rest.
At Stiklestad thou wast the head;
With flying banners onwards led
Thy bonde troops, and still fought on,
Until he fell—the much-mourned one."

Sigvat also made these verses on Bjorn:—

"The marshal Bjorn, too, I find,
A great example leaves behind,
How steady courage should stand proof,
Though other servants stand aloof.
To Russia first his steps he bent,
To serve his master still intent;
And now beside his king he fell,—
A noble death for skalds to tell."

241.—BEGINNING OF DAG HRINGSON'S ATTACK.

Dag Hringson still kept up the battle, and made in the beginning so fierce an assault that the bondes gave way, and some betook themselves to flight. There a great number of the bondes fell, and these lendermen, Erlend of Gerde and Aslak of Finey; and the banner also which they had stood under was cut down. This onset was particularly hot, and was called Dag's storm. But now Kalf Arnason, Harek of Thjotta, and Thorer Hund turned against Dag, with the array which had followed them, and then Dag was overwhelmed with numbers; so he betook himself to flight with the men still left him. There was a valley through which the main body of the fugitives fled,

and men lay scattered in heaps on both sides; and many were severely wounded, and many so fatigued that they were fit for nothing. The bondes pursued only a short way; for their leaders soon returned back to the field of battle, where they had their friends and relations to look after.

242.—KING OLAF'S MIRACLE SHOWN TO THORER HUND.

Thorer Hund went to where King Olaf's body lay, took care of it, laid it straight out on the ground, and spread a cloak over it. He told since that when he wiped the blood from the face it was very beautiful; and there was red in the cheeks, as if he only slept, and even much clearer than when he was in life. The king's blood came on Thorer's hand, and ran up between his fingers to where he had been wounded, and the wound grew up so speedily that it did not require to be bound up. This circumstance was testified by Thorer himself when King Olaf's holiness came to be generally known among the people; and Thorer Hund was among the first of the king's powerful opponents who endeavoured to spread abroad the king's sanctity.

243.—OF KALF ARNASON'S BROTHERS.

Kalf Arnason searched for his brothers who had fallen, and found Thorberg and Fin. It is related that Fin threw his dagger at him, and wanted to kill him, giving him hard words, and calling him a faithless villain, and a traitor to his king. Kalf did not regard it, but ordered Fin and Thorberg to be carried away from the field. When their

wounds were examined they were found not to be deadly, and they had fallen from fatigue, and under the weight of their weapons. Thereafter Kalf tried to bring his brothers down to a ship, and went himself with them. As soon as he was gone the whole bonde-army, having their homes in the neighbourhood, went off also, excepting those who had friends or relations to look after, or the bodies of the slain to take care of. The wounded were taken home to the farms, so that every house was full of them; and tents were erected over some. But wonderful as was the number collected in the bonde-army, no less wonderful was the haste with which this vast body was dispersed when it was once free; and the cause of this was, that the most of the people gathered together from the country places were longing for their homes.

244.—OF THE BONDES OF VERADAL.

The bondes who had their homes in Veradal went to the chiefs Harek and Thorer, and complained of their distress, saying, "The fugitives who have escaped from the battle have proceeded up over the valley of Veradal, and are destroying our habitations, and there is no safety for us to travel home so long as they are in the valley. Go after them with war-force, and let no mother's son of them escape with life; for that is what they intended for us if they had got the upper hand in the battle, and the same they would do now if they met us hereafter, and had better luck than we. It may also be that they will linger in the valley if they have nothing to be frightened for, and then they would not proceed very gently in the inhabited

country." The bondes made many words about this, urging the chiefs to advance directly, and kill those who had escaped. Now when the chiefs talked over this matter among themselves, they thought there was much truth in what the bondes said. They resolved, therefore, that Thorer Hund should undertake this expedition through Veradal, with 600 men of his own troops. Then, towards evening, he set out with his men; and Thorer continued his march without halt until he came in the night to Sula, where he heard the news that Dag Hringson had come there in the evening, with many other flocks of the king's men, and had halted there until they took supper, but were afterwards gone up to the mountains. Then Thorer said he did not care to pursue them up through the mountains, and he returned down the valley again, and they did not kill many of them this time. The bondes then returned to their homes, and the following day Thorer, with his people, went to their ships. The part of the king's men who were still on their legs concealed themselves in the forests, and some got help from the people.

245.—OF THE KING'S BROTHER, HARALD SIGURDSON.

Harald Sigurdson was severely wounded; but Ragnvald Brusason brought him to a bonde's the night after the battle, and the bonde took in Harald, and healed his wound in secret, and afterwards gave him his son to attend him. They went secretly over the mountains, and through the waste forests, and came out in Jamtaland. Harald Sigurdson was fifteen years old when King Olaf

fell. In Jamtaland Harald found Ragnvald Brusason; and they went both east to King Jarisleif in Russia, as is related in the Saga of Harald Sigurdson.

246.—OF THORMOD KOLBRUNARSKALD.

Thormod Kolbrunarskald was under King Olaf's banner in the battle; but when the king had fallen, the battle was raging so that of the king's men the one fell by the side of the other, and the most of those who stood on their legs were wounded. Thormod was also severely wounded, and retired, as all the others did, back from where there was most danger of life, and some even fled. Now when the onset began which is called Dag's storm, all of the king's men who were able to combat went there; but Thormod did not come into that combat, being unable to fight, both from his wound and from weariness, but he stood by the side of his comrade in the ranks, although he could do nothing. There he was struck by an arrow in the left side; but he broke off the shaft of the arrow, went out of the battle, and up towards the houses, where he came to a barn which was a large building. Thormod had his drawn sword in his hand; and as he went in a man met him, coming out, and said, "It is very bad there with howling and screaming; and a great shame it is that brisk young fellows cannot bear their wounds: it may be that the king's men have done bravely to-day, but they certainly bear their wounds very ill."

Thormod asks, "What is thy name?"

He called himself Kimbe.

Thormod: "Wast thou in the battle, too?"

"I was with the bondes, which was the best side," says he.

"And art thou wounded any way?" says Thormod.

"A little," said Kimbe. "And hast thou been in the battle too?"

Thormod replied, "I was with them who had the best."

"Art thou wounded?" says Kimbe.

"Not much to signify," replies Thormod.

As Kimbe saw that Thormod had a gold ring on his arm, he said, "Thou art certainly a king's man. Give me thy gold ring, and I will hide thee. The bondes will kill thee if thou fallest in their way."

Thormod says, "Take the ring if thou canst get it: I have lost that which is more worth."

Kimbe stretched out his hand, and wanted to take the ring; but Thormod, swinging his sword, cut off his hand: and it is related that Kimbe behaved himself no better under his wound than those he had been blaming just before. Kimbe went off, and Thormod sat down in the barn, and listened to what people were saying. The conversation was mostly about what each had seen in the battle, and about the valour of the combatants. Some praised most King Olaf's courage, and some named others who stood nowise behind him in bravery. Then Thormod sang these verses:—

"Olaf was brave beyond all doubt,—
At Stiklestad was none so stout;
Spattered with blood, the king, unsparing,
Cheered on his men with deed and daring.

But I have heard that some were there
Who in the fight themselves would spare;
Though, in the arrow-storm, the most
Had perils quite enough to boast."

247.—THORMOD'S DEATH.

Thormod went out, and entered into a chamber apart, in which there were many wounded men, and with them a woman binding their wounds. There was fire upon the floor, at which she warmed water to wash and clean their wounds. Thormod sat himself down beside the door, and one came in, and another went out, of those who were busy about the wounded men. One of them turned to Thormod, looked at him, and said, "Why art thou so dead-pale? Art thou wounded? Why dost thou not call for the help of the wound-healers?" Thormod then sang these verses:—

"I am not blooming, and the fair
And slender girl loves to care
For blooming youths—few care for me;
With Fenja's meal I cannot fee.
This is the reason why I feel
The slash and thrust of Danish steel;
And pale and faint, and bent with pain,
Return from yonder battle-plain."

Then Thormod stood up and went in towards the fire, and stood there awhile. The young woman said to him, "Go out, man, and bring in some of the split firewood which lies close beside the door." He went out and brought in an armful of wood, which he threw down upon the floor. Then the nurse-girl looked him in the face, and said, "Dreadfully pale is this man—why art thou so?" Then Thormod sang:—

"Thou wonderest, sweet sprig, at me,
A man so hideous to see:
Deep wounds but rarely mend the face,
The crippling blow gives little grace.
The arrow-drift o'ertook me, girl,—
A fine-ground arrow in the whirl
Went through me, and I feel the dart
Sits, lovely girl, too near my heart."

The girl said, "Let me see thy wound, and I will bind it." Thereupon Thormod sat down, cast off his clothes, and the girl saw his wounds, and examined that which

was in his side, and felt that a piece of iron was in it, but could not find where the iron had gone in. In a stone pot she had stirred together leeks and other herbs, and boiled them, and gave the wounded men of it to eat, by which she discovered if the wounds had penetrated into the belly; for if the wound had gone so deep, it would smell of leek. She brought some of this now to Thormod, and told him to eat of it. He replied, "Take it away, I have no appetite for my broth." Then she took a large pair of tongs, and tried to pull out the iron; but it sat too fast, and would in no way come, and as the wound was swelled, little of it stood out to lay hold of. Now said Thormod, "Cut so deep in that thou canst get at the iron with the tongs, and give me the tongs and let me pull." She did as he said. Then Thormod took a gold ring from his hand, gave it to the nurse-woman, and told her to do with it what she liked. "It is a good man's gift," said he: "King Olaf gave me the ring this morning." Then Thormod took the tongs, and pulled the iron out; but on the iron there was a hook, at which there hung some morsels of flesh from the heart,—some white, some red. When he saw that, he said, "The king has fed us well. I am fat, even at the heart-roots;" and so saying he leant back, and was dead. And with this ends what we have to say about Thormod.

248.—OF SOME CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BATTLE.

King Olaf fell on Wednesday, the 29th of July (1030). It was near mid-day when the two armies met, and the battle began before half-past one, and before three the

king fell. The darkness continued from about half-past one to three also. Sigvat the skald speaks thus of the result of the battle:—

"The loss was great to England's foes,
When their chief fell beneath the blows
By his own thoughtless people given,—
When the king's shield in two was riven.
The people's sovereign took the field,
The people clove the sovereign's shield.
Of all the chiefs, that bloody day,
Dag only came out of the fray."

And he composed these:—

"Such mighty bonde-power, I ween,
With chiefs or rulers ne'er was seen.
It was the people's mighty power
That struck the king that fatal hour.
When such a king, in such a strife,
By his own people lost his life,
Full many a gallant man must feel
The death-wound from the people's steel."

The bondes did not spoil the slain upon the field of battle, for immediately after the battle there came upon many of them who had been against the king a kind of dread as it were; yet they held by their evil inclination, for they resolved among themselves that all who had fallen with the king should not receive the interment which belongs to good men, but reckoned them all robbers and outlaws. But the men who had power, and had relations on the field, cared little for this, but removed their remains to the churches, and took care of their burial.

249.—A MIRACLE ON A BLIND MAN.

Thorgils Halmason and his son Grim went to the field of battle towards evening when it was dusk, took King Olaf's corpse up, and bore it to a little empty houseman's hut which stood on the other side of their farm. They had light and water with them. Then they took the clothes off the body, swathed it in a linen cloth, laid it

down in the house, and concealed it under some firewood so that nobody could see it, even if people came into the hut. Thereafter they went home again to the farm-house. A great many beggars and poor people had followed both armies, who begged for meat; and the evening after the battle many remained there, and sought lodging round about in all the houses, great or small. It is told of a blind man who was poor, that a boy attended him and led him. They went out around the farm to seek a lodging, and came to the same empty house, of which the door was so low that they had almost to creep in. Now when the blind man had come in, he fumbled about the floor seeking a place where he could lay himself down. He had a hat on his head, which fell down over his face when he stooped down. He felt with his hands that there was moisture on the floor, and he put up his wet hand to raise his hat, and in doing so put his fingers on his eyes. There came immediately such an itching in his eyelids, that he wiped the water with his fingers from his eyes, and went out of the hut, saying nobody could lie there, it was so wet. When he came out of the hut he could distinguish his hands, and all that was near him, as far as things can be distinguished by sight in the darkness of night; and he went immediately to the farm-house into the room, and told all the people he had got his sight again, and could see everything, although many knew he had been blind for a long time, for he had been there, before, going about among the houses of the neighbourhood. He said he first got his sight when he was coming out of a little ruinous hut which was all wet inside. "I groped

in the water," said he, "and rubbed my eyes with my wet hands." He told where the hut stood. The people who heard him wondered much at this event, and spoke among themselves of what it could be that produced it: but Thorgils the peasant and his son Grim thought they knew how this came to pass; and as they were much afraid the king's enemies might go there and search the hut, they went and took the body out of it, and removed it to a garden, where they concealed it, and then returned to the farm, and slept there all night.

250.—OF THORER HUND.

The fifth day (Thursday), Thorer Hund came down the valley of Veradal to Stiklestad; and many people, both chiefs and bondes, accompanied him. The field of battle was still being cleared, and people were carrying away the bodies of their friends and relations, and were giving the necessary help to such of the wounded as they wished to save; but many had died since the battle. Thorer Hund went to where the king had fallen, and searched for his body; but not finding it, he inquired if any one could tell him what had become of the corpse, but nobody could tell him where it was. Then he asked the bonde Thorgils, who said, "I was not in the battle, and knew little of what took place there; but many reports are abroad, and among others that King Olaf has been seen in the night up at Staf, and a troop of people with him: but if he fell in the battle, your men must have concealed him in some hole, or under some stone-heap." Now although Thorer Hund knew for certain that the

king had fallen, many allowed themselves to believe, and to spread abroad the report, that the king had escaped from the battle, and would in a short time come again upon them with an army. Then Thorer went to his ships, and sailed down the fjord, and the bonde-army dispersed, carrying with them all the wounded men who could bear to be removed.

251.—OF KING OLAF'S BODY.

Thorgils Halmason and his son Grim had King Olaf's body, and were anxious about preserving it from falling into the hands of the king's enemies, and being ill-treated; for they heard the bondes speaking about burning it, or sinking it in the sea. The father and son had seen a clear light burning at night over the spot on the battle-field where King Olaf's body lay, and since, while they concealed it, they had always seen at night a light burning over the corpse; therefore they were afraid the king's enemies might seek the body where this signal was visible. They hastened, therefore, to take the body to a place where it would be safe. Thorgils and his son accordingly made a coffin, which they adorned as well as they could, and laid the king's body in it; and afterwards made another coffin in which they laid stones and straw, about as much as the weight of a man, and carefully closed the coffins. As soon as the whole bonde-army had left Stiklestad, Thorgils and his son made themselves ready, got a large rowing-boat, and took with them seven or eight men, who were all Thorgil's relations or friends, and privately took the coffin with the king's body down to the

boat, and set it under the foot-boards. They had also with them the coffin containing the stones, and placed it in the boat where all could see it; and then went down the fjord with a good opportunity of wind and weather, and arrived in the dusk of the evening at Nidaros, where they brought up at the king's pier. Then Thorgils sent some of his men up to the town to Bishop Sigurd, to say that they were come with the king's body. As soon as the bishop heard this news, he sent his men down to the pier, and they took a small rowing-boat, came alongside of Thorgil's ship, and demanded the king's body. Thorgils and his people then took the coffin which stood in view, and bore it into the boat; and the bishop's men rowed out into the fjord, and sank the coffin in the sea. It was now quite dark. Thorgils and his people now rowed up into the river past the town, and landed at a place called Saurhlid, above the town. Then they carried the king's body to an empty house standing at a distance from other houses, and watched over it for the night, while Thorgils went down to the town, where he spoke with some of the best friends of King Olaf, and asked them if they would take charge of the king's body; but none of them dared to do so. Then Thorgils and his men went with the body higher up the river, buried it in a sand-hill on the banks, and levelled all around it so that no one could observe that people had been at work there. They were ready with all this before break of day, when they returned to their vessel, went immediately out of the river, and proceeded on their way home to Stiklestad.

252.—OF THE BEGINNING OF KING SVEIN ALFIFASON'S GOVERNMENT.

Svein, a son of King Canute, and of Alfifa, a daughter of Earl Alfrin, had been appointed to govern Jomsborg in Vindland. There came a message to him from his father King Canute, that he should come to Denmark; and likewise that afterwards he should proceed to Norway, and take that kingdom under his charge, and assume, at the same time, the title of king of Norway. Svein repaired to Denmark, and took many people with him from thence, and also Earl Harald and many other people of consequence attended him. Thorarin Loftunga speaks of this in the song he composed about King Svein, called the Glelogn song:—

"'Tis told by fame,
How grandly came
The Danes to tend
Their young king Svein
Grandest was he,
That all could see;
Then, one by one,
Each following man
More splendour wore
Than him before."

Then Svein proceeded to Norway, and his mother Alfifa was with him; and he was taken to be king at every Law-thing in the country. He had already come as far as Viken at the time the battle was fought at Stiklestad, and King Olaf fell. Svein continued his journey until he came north, in autumn, to the Throndhjem country; and there, as elsewhere, he was received as king.

253.—OF KING SVEIN'S LAWS.

King Svein introduced new laws in many respects into the country, partly after those which were in Denmark, and in part much more severe. No man must leave the

country without the king's permission; or if he did, his property fell to the king. Whoever killed a man outright, should forfeit all his land and movables. If any one was banished the country, and an heritage fell to him, the king took his inheritance. At Yule every man should pay the king a meal of malt from every harvest steading, and a leg of a three-year old ox, which was called a friendly gift, together with a spand of butter; and every house-wife a rock full of unspun lint, as thick as one could span with the longest fingers of the hand. The bondes were bound to build all the houses the king required upon his farms. Of every seven males one should be taken for the service of war, and reckoning from the fifth year of age; and the outfit of ships should be reckoned in the same proportion. Every man who rowed upon the sea to fish should pay the king five fish as a tax, for the land defence, wherever he might come from. Every ship that went out of the country should have stowage reserved open for the king in the middle of the ship. Every man, foreigner or native, who went to Iceland, should pay a tax to the king. And to all this was added, that Danes should enjoy so much consideration in Norway, that one witness of them should invalidate ten of Northmen.[1]

When these laws were promulgated the minds of the people were instantly raised against them, and murmurs were heard among them. They who had not taken part against King Olaf said, "Now take your reward and

[1]This may probably have referred not to witnesses of an act, but to the class of witnesses in the jurisprudence of the Middle Ages called compurgators, who testified not the fact, but their confidence in the statements of the accused; and from which, possibly, our English bail for offenders arose.—L.

friendship from the Canute race, ye men of the interior Throndhjem who fought against King Olaf, and deprived him of his kingdom. Ye were promised peace and justice, and now ye have got oppression and slavery for your great treachery and crime." Nor was it very easy to contradict them, as all men saw how miserable the change had been. But people had not the boldness to make an insurrection against King Svein, principally because many had given King Canute their sons or other near relations as hostages; and also because no one appeared as leader of an insurrection. They very soon, however, complained of King Svein; and his mother Alfifa got much of the blame of all that was against their desire. Then the truth, with regard to Olaf, became evident to many.

254.—OF KING OLAF'S SANCTITY.

This winter (1031) many in the Throndhjem land began to declare that Olaf was in reality a holy man, and his sanctity was confirmed by many miracles. Many began to make promises and prayers to King Olaf in the matters in which they thought they required help, and many found great benefit from these invocations; some in respect of health, others of a journey, or other circumstances in which such help seemed needful.

255.—OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

Einar Tambaskelfer was come home from England to his farm, and had the fiefs which King Canute had given him when they met in Throndhjem, and which were al-

most an earldom. Einar had not been in the strife against King Olaf, and congratulated himself upon it. He remembered that King Canute had promised him the earldom over Norway, and at the same time remembered that King Canute had not kept his promise. He was accordingly the first great person who looked upon King Olaf as a saint.

256.—OF THE SONS OF ARNE.

Fin Arnason remained but a short time at Eggja with his brother Kalf; for he was in the highest degree ill-pleased that Kalf had been in the battle against King Olaf, and always made his brother the bitterest reproaches on this account. Thorberg Arnason was much more temperate in his discourse than Fin; but yet he hastened away, and went home to his farm. Kalf gave the two brothers a good long-ship, with full rigging and other necessaries, and a good retinue. Therefore they went home to their farms, and sat quietly at home. Arne Arnason lay long ill of his wounds, but got well at last without injury of any limb, and in winter he proceeded south to his farm. All the brothers made their peace with King Svein, and sat themselves quietly down in their homes.

257.—BISHOP SIGURD'S FLIGHT.

The summer after (1031) there was much talk about King Olaf's sanctity, and there was a great alteration in the expressions of all people concerning him. There were many who now believed that King Olaf must be a saint, even among those who had persecuted him with

the greatest animosity, and would never in their conversation allow truth or justice in his favour. People began then to turn their reproaches against the men who had principally excited opposition to the king; and on this account Bishop Sigurd in particular was accused. He got so many enemies, that he found it most advisable to go over to England to King Canute. Then the Throndhjem people sent men with a verbal message to the Uplands, to Bishop Grimkel, desiring him to come north to Throndhjem. King Olaf had sent Bishop Grimkel back to Norway when he went east into Russia, and since that time Grimkel had been in the Uplands. When the message came to the bishop he made ready to go, and it contributed much to this journey that the bishop considered it as true what was told of King Olaf's miracles and sanctity.

258.—KING OLAF THE SAINT'S REMAINS DISINTERRED.

Bishop Grimkel went to Einar Tambaskelfer, who received him joyfully. They talked over many things, and, among others, of the important events which had taken place in the country; and concerning these they were perfectly agreed. Then the bishop proceeded to the town (Nïdaros), and was well received by all the community. He inquired particularly concerning the miracles of King Olaf that were reported, and received satisfactory accounts of them. Thereupon the bishop sent a verbal message to Stiklestad to Thorgils and his son Grim, inviting them to come to the town to him. They did not decline the invitation, but set out on the road immediately,

and came to the town and to the bishop. They related to him all the signs that had presented themselves to them, and also where they had deposited the king's body. The bishop sent a message to Einar Tambaskelfer, who came to the town. Then the bishop and Einar had an audience of the king and Alfifa, in which they asked the king's leave to have King Olaf's body taken up out of the earth. The king gave his permission, and told the bishop to do as he pleased in the matter. At that time there were a great many people in the town. The bishop, Einar, and some men with them, went to the place where the king's body was buried, and had the place dug; but the coffin had already raised itself almost to the surface of the earth. It was then the opinion of many that the bishop should proceed to have the king buried in the earth at Clement's church; and it was so done. Twelve months and five days (Aug. 3, 1031), after King Olaf's death his holy remains were dug up, and the coffin had raised itself almost entirely to the surface of the earth; and the coffin appeared quite new, as if it had but lately been made. When Bishop Grimkel came to King Olaf's opened coffin, there was a delightful and fresh smell. Thereupon the bishop uncovered the king's face, and his appearance was in no respect altered, and his cheeks were as red as if he had but just fallen asleep. The men who had seen King Olaf when he fell remarked, also, that his hair and nails had grown as much as if he had lived on the earth all the time that had passed since his fall. Thereupon King Svein, and all the chiefs who were at the place, went out to see King Olaf's body. Then said Alfifa,

"People buried in sand rot very slowly, and it would not have been so if he had been buried in earth." Afterwards the bishop took scissors, clipped the king's hair, and arranged his beard; for he had had a long beard, according to the fashion of that time. Then said the bishop to the king and Alfifa, "Now the king's hair and beard are such as when he gave up the ghost, and it has grown as much as ye see has been cut off." Alfifa answers, "I will believe in the sanctity of his hair, if it will not burn in the fire; but I have often seen men's hair whole and undamaged after lying longer in the earth than this man's." Then the bishop had live coals put into a pan, blessed it, cast incense upon it, and then laid King Olaf's hair on the fire. When all the incense was burnt the bishop took the hair out of the fire, and showed the king and the other chiefs that it was not consumed. Now Alfifa asked that the hair should be laid upon unconsecrated fire; but Einar Tambaskelfer told her to be silent, and gave her many severe reproaches for her unbelief. After the bishop's recognition, with the king's approbation and the decision of the Thing, it was determined that King Olaf should be considered a man truly holy; whereupon his body was transported into Clement's church, and a place was prepared for it near the high altar. The coffin was covered with costly cloth, and stood under a gold embroidered tent. Many kinds of miracles were soon wrought by King Olaf's holy remains.

259.—OF KING OLAF'S MIRACLES.

In the sand-hill where King Olaf's body had lain on

the ground a beautiful spring of water came up and many human ailments and infirmities were cured by its waters. Things were put in order around it, and the water ever since has been carefully preserved. There was first a chapel built, and an altar consecrated, where the king's body had lain; but now Christ's church stands upon the spot. Archbishop Eystein had a high altar raised upon the spot where the king's grave had been, when he erected the great temple which now stands there; and it is the same spot on which the altar of the old Christ church had stood. It is said that Olaf's church stands on the spot on which the empty house had stood in which King Olaf's body had been laid for the night. The place over which the holy remains of King Olaf were carried up from the vessel is now called Olaf's Road, and is now in the middle of the town. The bishop adorned King Olaf's holy remains, and cut his nails and hair; for both grew as if he had still been alive. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"I lie not, when I say the king
Seemed as alive in every thing:
His nails, his yellow hair still growing,
And round his ruddy cheek still flowing,
As when, to please the Russian queen,
His yellow locks adorned were seen;
Or to the blind he cured he gave
A tress, their precious sight to save."

Thorarin Loftunga also composed a song upon Svein Alfifason, called the Glelogn Song, in which are these verses:—

"Svein, king of all,
In Olaf's hall
Now sits on high;
And Olaf's eye
Looks down from heaven,
Where it is given
To him to dwell:
Or here in cell,
As heavenly saint,
To heal men's plaint,
May our gold-giver
Live here for ever!

"King Olaf there
To hold a share
On earth prepared,
Nor labour spared
A seat to win
From heaven's great King;
Which he has won
Next God's own Son.

"His holy form,
Untouched by worm,
Lies at this day

Where good men pray,
And nails and hair
Grow fresh and fair;
His cheek is red,
His flesh not dead.

"Around his bier,
Good people hear
The small bells ring
Over the king,
Or great bell toll;
And living soul
Not one can tell
Who tolls the bell.

"Tapers up there,
(Which Christ holds dear,)
By day and night
The altar light:
Olaf did so,
And all men know
In heaven he
From sin sits free.

"And crowds do come,
The deaf and dumb,
Cripple and blind,
Sick of all kind,
Cured to be
On bended knee;
And off the ground
Rise whole and sound.

"To Olaf pray
To eke thy day,
To save thy land
From spoiler's hand.
God's man is he
To deal to thee
Good crops and peace;
Let not prayer cease.

"Book-prayers prevail,
If, nail for nail,[1]
Thou tellest on,
Forgetting none."

Thorarin Loftunga was himself with King Svein, and heard these great testimonials of King Olaf's holiness, that people, by the heavenly power, could hear a sound over his holy remains as if bells were ringing, and that candles were lighted of themselves upon the altar as by a heavenly fire. But when Thorarin says that a multitude of lame, and blind, and other sick, who came to the holy Olaf, went back cured, he means nothing more than that there were a vast number of persons who at the beginning of King Olaf's miraculous working regained their health. King Olaf's greatest miracles are clearly written down, although they occurred somewhat later.

260.—OF KING OLAF'S AGE AND REIGN.

It is reckoned by those who have kept an exact account, that Olaf the Saint was king of Norway for fifteen years

[1]Before the entrance of the temples or churches were posts called Ondveigis-sulor, with nails called Rigin-naglar—the gods' nails—either for ornament, or, as Schoning suggests, to assist the people in reckoning weeks, months, festivals, and in reckoning or keeping tale of prayers repeated, and to recall them to memory, in the same way as beads are used still by the common people in Catholic countries for the same purpose.—L.

from the time Earl Svein left the country; but he had received the title of king from the people of the Uplands the winter before. Sigvat the skald tells this:—

"For fifteen winters o'er the land
King Olaf held the chief command,
Before he fell up in the North:
His fall made known to us his worth.
No worthier prince before his day
In our North land e'er held the sway.
Too short he held it for our good:
All men wish now that he had stood."

Saint Olaf was thirty-five years old when he fell, according to what Are Frode the priest says, and he had been in twenty pitched battles. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"Some leaders trust in God—some not;
Even so their men; but well I wot
God-fearing Olaf fought and won
Twenty pitched battles, one by one,
And always placed upon his right
His Christian men in a hard fight.
May God be merciful, I pray,
To him—for he ne'er shunned the fray."

We have now related a part of King Olaf's story, namely, the events which took place while he ruled over Norway; also his death, and how his holiness was manifested. Now shall we not neglect to mention what it was that most advanced his honour. This was his miracles; but these will come to be treated of afterwards in this book.

261.—OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

King Svein, the son of Canute the Great, ruled over Norway for some years; but was a child both in age and understanding. His mother Alfifa had most sway in the country; and the people of the country were her great enemies, both then and ever since. Danish people had a great superiority given them within the country, to the great dissatisfaction of the people; and when conversation turned that way, the people of the rest of Norway accused the Throndhjem people of having principally

occasioned King Olaf the Holy's fall, and also that the men of Norway were subject, through them, to the ill government by which oppression and slavery had come upon all the people, both great and small; indeed upon the whole community. They insisted that it was the duty of the Throndhjem people to attempt opposition and insurrection, and thus relieve the country from such tyranny; and, in the opinion of the common people, Throndhjem was also the chief seat of the strength of Norway at that time, both on account of the chiefs and of the population of that quarter. When the Throndhjem people heard these remarks of their countrymen, they could not deny that there was much truth in them, and that in depriving King Olaf of life and land they had committed a great crime, and at the same time the misdeed had been ill paid. The chiefs began to hold consultations and conferences with each other, and the leader of these was Einar Tambaskelfer. It was likewise the case with Kalf Arnason, who began to find into what errors he had been drawn by King Canute's persuasion. All the promises which King Canute had made to Kalf had been broken; for he had promised him the earldom and the highest authority in Norway: and although Kalf had been the leader in the battle against King Olaf, and had deprived him of his life and kingdom, Kalf had not got any higher dignity than he had before. He felt that he had been deceived, and therefore messages passed between the brothers Kalf, Fin, Thorberg, and Arne, and they renewed their family friendship.

262.—OF KING SVEIN'S LEVY.

When King Svein had been three years in Norway (1031-33), the news was received that a force was assembled in the western countries, under a chief who called himself Trygve, and gave out that he was a son of Olaf Trygvason and Queen Gyda of England. Now when King Svein heard that foreign troops had come to the country, he ordered out the people on a levy in the north, and the most of the lendermen hastened to him; but Einar Tambaskelfer remained at home, and would not go out with King Svein. When King Svein's order came to Kalf Arnason at Eggja, that he should go out on a levy with King Svein, he took a twenty-benched ship which he owned, went on board with his house-servants, and in all haste proceeded out of the fjord, without waiting for King Svein, sailed southwards to More, and continued his voyage south until he came to Giske to his brother Thorberg. Then all the brothers, the sons of Arne, held a meeting, and consulted with each other. After this Kalf returned to the north again; but when he came to Frekeysund, King Svein was lying in the sound before him. When Kalf came rowing from the south into the sound they hailed each other, and the king's men ordered Kalf to bring up with his vessel, and follow the king for the defence of the country. Kalf replies, "I have done enough, if not too much, when I fought against my own countrymen to increase the power of the Canute family." Thereupon Kalf rowed away to the north until he came home to Eggja. None of these Arnasons appeared at this levy to accompany the king. He steered with his fleet

southwards along the land; but as he could not hear the least news of any fleet having come from the west, he steered south to Rogaland, and all the way to Agder; for many guessed that Trygve would first make his attempt on Viken, because his forefathers had been there, and had most of their strength from that quarter, and he had himself great strength by family connection there.

263.—KING TRYGVE OLAFSON'S FALL.

When Trygve came from the west he landed first on the coast of Hordaland, and when he heard King Svein had gone south he went the same way to Rogaland. As soon as Svein got the intelligence that Trygve had come from the west he returned, and steered north with his fleet: and both fleets met within Bokn in Soknarsund, not far from the place where Erling Skjalgson fell. The battle, which took place on a Sunday, was great and severe. People tell that Trygve threw spears with both hands at once. "So my father," said he, "taught me to celebrate mass." His enemies had said that he was the son of a priest; but the praise must be allowed him that he showed himself more like a son of King Olaf Trygvason, for this Trygve was a slaughtering man. In this battle King Trygve fell, and many of his men with him; but some fled, and some received quarter and their lives. It is thus related in the ballad of Trygve:—

"Trygve comes from the northern coast,
King Svein turns round with all his host;
To meet and fight, they both prepare,
And where they met grim death was there.

From the sharp strife I was not far,—
I heard the din and the clang of war;
And the Hordaland men at last gave way,
And their leader fell, and they lost the day."

This battle is also told of in the ballad about King Svein, thus:—

"My girl! it was a Sunday morn,
And many a man ne'er saw its eve,
Though ale and leeks by old wives borne
The bruised and wounded did relieve.

'Twas Sunday morn, when Svein calls out,
'Stem to stem your vessels bind;'
The raven a mid-day feast smells out,
And he comes croaking up the wind."

After this battle King Svein ruled the country for some time, and there was peace in the land. The winter after it (1034) he passed in the south parts of the country.

264.—OF THE COUNSELS OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER AND KALF ARNASON.

Einar Tambaskelfer and Kalf Arnason had this winter meetings and consultations between themselves in the merchant town.[1] Then there came a messenger from King Canute to Kalf Arnason, with a message to send him three dozen axes, which must be chosen and good. Kalf replies, "I will send no axes to King Canute. Tell him I will bring his son Svein so many, that he shall not think he is in want of any."

265.—OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER AND KALF ARNASON'S JOURNEY.

Early in spring (1034) Einar Tambaskelfer and Kalf Arnason made themselves ready for a journey, with a great retinue of the best and most select men that could be found in the Throndhjem country. They went in spring eastward over the ridge of the country to Jamta-

[1]Nidaros, or Throndhjem, is usually called merely the merchant town.—L.

land, from thence to Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod, where they procured ships, with which in summer they proceeded east to Russia, and came in autumn to Ladoga. They sent men up to Novgorod to King Jarisleif, with the errand that they offered Magnus, the son of King Olaf the Saint, to take him with them, follow him to Norway, and give him assistance to attain his father's heritage and be made king over the country. When this message came to King Jarisleif he held a consultation with the queen and some chiefs, and they all resolved unanimously to send a message to the Northmen, and ask them to come to King Jarisleif and Magnus; for which journey safe conduct was given them. When they came to Novgorod it was settled among them that the Northmen who had come there should become Magnus's men, and be his subjects; and to this Kalf and the other men who had been against King Olaf at Stiklestad were solemnly bound by oath. On the other hand, King Magnus promised them, under oath, secure peace and full reconciliation; and that he would be true and faithful to them all when he got the dominions and kingdom of Norway. He was to become Kalf Arnason's foster-son; and Kalf should be bound to do all that Magnus might think necessary for extending his dominion, and making it more independent than formerly.

SAGA OF MAGNUS THE GOOD.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Magnus reigned from 1035 to 1047, when he died. During the last year of his reign his half-brother Harald Sigurdson was his co-regent.

The history of Magnus is treated in *Agrip.*, ch. 28-32; in *Fagrskinna*, ch. 119-146; in *Fornmannasögur*, part vi., and in *Knytlinga Saga.*

The skalds quoted in this saga are: Arnor the earls' skald (Arnor Jarlaskald), Sigvat, Thjodulf, Bjarne Gullbrarskald, Thorgeir Flek, Od Kikinaskald.

1.—MAGNUS OLAFSON'S JOURNEY FROM THE WEST.

After Yule Magnus Olafson began his journey from the East from Novgorod to Ladoga, where he rigged out his ships as soon as the ice was loosened in spring (1035).

Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of this in the poem on Magnus:—

"It is no loose report that he,
Who will command on land and sea,
In blood will make his foeman feel
Olaf's sword Hneiter's sharp blue steel.

This generous youth, who scatters gold,
Norway's brave son, but ten years old,
Is rigging ships in Russia's lake,
His crown, with friend's support, to take."

In spring Magnus sailed from the East to Svithjod. So says Arnor:—

"The young sword-stainer called a Thing,
Where all his men should meet their king:
Heroes who find the eagle food
Before their lord in arms stood.

And now the curved plank of the bow
Cleaves the blue sea; the ocean-plough,
By grey winds driven across the main,
Reaches Sigtuna's grassy plain."

Here it is related that when King Magnus and his fellow-travellers sailed from the East to Svithjod, they brought up at Sigtuna. Emund Olafson was then king in Svithjod. Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, was also there. She received very gladly and well her stepson King Magnus, and summoned immediately a numerous Thing of Swedes at a place called Hangrar. At the Thing Queen Astrid spoke these words:—"Here is come to us a son of Olaf the Saint, called Magnus, who intends to make an expedition to Norway to seek his father's heritage. It is my great duty to give him aid towards this expedition; for he is my stepson, as is well known to all, both Swedes and Norwegians. Neither shall he want men or money, in so far as I can procure them or have influence, in order that his strength may be as great as possible; and all the men who will support this cause of his shall have my fullest friendship; and I would have it known that I intend myself to go with him on this attempt, that all may see I will spare nothing that is in my power to help him." She spoke long and cleverly in this strain; but when she had ended many replied thus:—"The Swedes made no honourable progress in Norway when they followed King Olaf his father, and now no better success is to be expected, as this man is but in years of boyhood; and therefore we have little inclination for this expedition." Astrid replies, "All men who wish to be thought of true courage must not be deterred by such considerations. If any have lost connections at the side of King Olaf, or been themselves wounded, now is the time to show a man's

heart and courage, and go to Norway to take vengeance." Astrid succeeded so far with words and encouragement that many men determined to go with her, and follow King Magnus to Norway. Sigvat the skald speaks of this:—

"Now Astrid, Olaf's widowed queen,—
She who so many a change had seen,—
Took all the gifts of happier days,
Jewels and rings, all she could raise,
And at a Thing at Hangrar, where
The Swedes were numerous, did declare
What Olaf's son proposed to do,
And brought her gifts—their pay—in view.

"And with the Swedes no wiser plan,
To bring out every brave bold man,
Could have been found, had Magnus been
The son himself of the good queen.
With help of Christ, she hoped to bring
Magnus to be the land's sole king,
As Harald was, who in his day
Obtained o'er all the upper sway.

"And glad are we so well she sped,—
The people's friend is now their head;
And good King Magnus always shows
How much he to Queen Astrid owes.
Such stepmothers as this good queen
In truth are very rarely seen;
And to this noble woman's praise
The skald with joy his song will raise."

Thiodolf the skald also says in his song of Magnus:—

"When thy brave ship left the land,
The bending yard could scarce withstand
The fury of the whistling gale,
That split thy many-coloured sail;
And many a stout ship, tempest-tost,
Was in that howling storm lost
That brought thee safe to Sigtuna's shore,
Far from the sound of ocean's roar."

2.—MAGNUS'S EXPEDITION FROM SVITHJOD.

King Magnus set out on his journey from Sigtuna with a great force, which he had gathered in Svithjod. They proceeded through Svithjod on foot to Helsingjaland. So says Arnor, the earl's skald:—

"And many a dark-red Swedish shield
Marched with thee from the Swedish field.
The country people crowded in,
To help Saint Olaf's son to win;
And chosen men by thee were led,
Men who have stained the wolf's tongue red.
Each milk-white shield and polished spear
Came to a splendid gathering there."

Magnus Olafson went from the East through Jamtaland over the keel-ridge of the country and came down

upon the Throndhjem district, where all men welcomed the king with joy. But no sooner did the men of King Svein, the son of Alfifa, hear that King Magnus Olafson was come to the country, than they fled on all sides and concealed themselves, so that no opposition was made to King Magnus; for King Svein was in the south part of the country. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:

"He who the eagle's talons stains
Rushed from the East on Throndhjem's plains;
The terror of his plumed helm
Drove his pale foemen from the realm.
The lightning of thy eye so near,
Great king! thy foemen could not bear.
Scattered they fled—their only care
If thou their wretched lives wilt spare."

3.—MAGNUS MADE KING.

Magnus Olafson advanced to the town (Nidaros), where he was joyfully received. He then summoned the people to the Eyra-thing;[1] and when the bondes met at the Thing, Magnus was taken to be king over the whole land, as far as his father Olaf had possessed it. Then the king selected a court, and named lendermen, and placed bailiffs and officers in all domains and offices. Immediately after harvest King Magnus ordered a levy through all Throndhjem land, and he collected men readily; and thereafter he proceeded southwards along the coast.

4.—KING SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

King Svein Alfifason was staying in South Hordaland when he heard this news of war. He immediately sent out war-tokens to four different quarters, summoned the

[1]Eyra Thing, held on the ayr of the river Nid, that is, on the spit of sand, still called an ayr in the north of Scotland, dividing a lake, pond, or river-mouth from the sea. At the Thing held here the kings of Norway were chosen and proclaimed. It was held to be the proper Thing for settling disputes between kings in Norway.—L.

bondes to him, and made it known to all that they should join him with men and ships to defend the country. All the men who were in the neighbourhood of the king presented themselves; and the king formed a Thing, at which in a speech he set forth his business, and said he would advance against Magnus Olafson and have a battle with him, if the bondes would aid his cause. The king's speech was not very long, and was not received with much approbation by the bondes. Afterwards the Danish chiefs who were about the king made long and clever speeches; but the bondes then took up the word, and answered them; and although many said they would follow Svein, and fight on his side, some refused to do so bluntly, some were altogether silent, and some declared they would join King Magnus as soon as they had an opportunity. Then King Svein says, "Methinks very few of the bondes to whom we sent a message have appeared here; and of those who have come, and tell us to our face that they will join King Magnus as soon as they can, we shall have as little benefit as of those who say they will sit at home quietly. It is the same with those who say nothing at all. But as to those who promise to help us, there are not more than every other man; and that force will avail us little against King Magnus. It is my counsel, therefore, that we do not trust to these bondes; but let us rather go to the land where all the people are sure and true to us, and where we will obtain forces to conquer this country again." As soon as the king had made known this resolution all his men followed it, turned their ship's bows, and hoisted sail. King Svein sailed eastward along the

land, and then set right over to Denmark without delay, and Hardaknut received his brother Svein very kindly. At their first meeting Hardaknut offered King Svein to divide the kingdom of Denmark with him, which offer King Svein accepted.

5.—KING MAGNUS'S JOURNEY TO NORWAY.

In autumn (1035) King Magnus proceeded eastward to the end of the country, and was received as king throughout the whole land, and the country people were rejoiced at his arrival.

6.—DEATH OF KING CANUTE THE GREAT AND HIS SON SVEIN.

King Svein, Canute's son, went to Denmark, as before related, and took part in the government with his brother Hardaknut. In the same autumn King Canute the Great died in England, the 13th November, forty years old, and was buried at Winchester. He had been king of Denmark for twenty-seven years, and over Denmark and England together twenty-four years, and also over Norway for seven years. King Canute's son Harald was then made king in England. The same winter (1036) King Svein, Alfifa's son, died in Denmark. Thiodolf the skald made these lines concerning King Magnus:—

"Through Sweden's dirty roads the throng
Followed the king in spearmen strong.
Svein doth fly, in truth afraid,
And partly by his men betrayed:
Flying to Denmark o'er the sea,
He leaves the land quite clear to thee."

Bjarne Gullbrarskald composed the following lines concerning Kalf Arnason:—

"By thee the kings got each his own,—
Magnus by thee got Norway's throne;
And Svein in Denmark got a seat,
When out of Norway he was beat.

Kalf! it was you who showed the way
To our young king, the battle-lover,—
From Russia to his father's sway
You showed the way, and brought him over."

King Magnus ruled over Norway this winter (1036), and Hardaknut over Denmark.

7.—RECONCILIATION BETWEEN HARDAKNUT AND KING MAGNUS.

The following spring (1036) the kings on both sides ordered out a levy, and the news was that they would have a battle at the Gaut river; but when the two armies approached each other, the lendermen in the one army sent messengers to their connections and friends in the other; and it came to a proposal for a reconciliation between the two kings, especially as, from both kings being but young and childish, some powerful men, who had been chosen in each of the countries for that purpose, had the rule of the country on their account. It thus was brought about that there was a friendly meeting between the kings, and in this meeting a peace was proposed; and the peace was to be a brotherly union under oath to keep the peace towards each other to the end of their lives; and if one of them should die without leaving a son, the longest liver should succeed to the whole land and people. Twelve of the principal men in each kingdom swore to the kings that this treaty should be observed, so long as any one of them was in life. Then the kings separated, and each returned home to his kingdom; and the treaty was kept as long as both lived.

8.—OF QUEEN ASTRID.

Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, came to Norway with King Magnus her stepson, as before related, and was held by him deservedly in great honour and esteem. Then came also Alfhild, King Magnus's mother, to the court, and the king received her with the greatest affection, and showed her great respect. But it went with Alfhild, as it does with many who come to power and honour, that pride keeps pace with promotion. She was ill pleased that Queen Astrid was treated with more respect, had a higher seat, and more attention. Alfhild wanted to have a seat next to the king, but Astrid called Alfhild her slave-woman, as indeed she had formerly been when Astrid was queen of Norway and King Olaf ruled the land, and therefore would on no account let her have a seat beside her, and they could not lodge in the same house.

9.—OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

Sigvat the skald had gone to Rome, where he was at the time of the battle of Stiklestad.

He was on his way back from the South when he heard tidings of King Olaf's fall, which gave him great grief. He then sang these lines:—

"One morning early on a hill,
The misty town asleep and still,
Wandering I thought upon the fields,
Strewed o'er with broken mail and shields,
Where our king fell,—our kind good king,
Where now his happy youthful spring?
My father too!—for Thord was then
One of the good king's chosen men."

One day Sigvat went through a village, and heard a husband lamenting grievously over the loss of his wife,

striking his breast, tearing his clothes, weeping bitterly, and saying he wanted to die; and Sigvat sang these lines:—

"This poor man mourns a much-loved wife,
Gladly would he be quit of life.
Must love be paid for by our grief?
The price seems great for joy so brief.
But the brave man who knows no fear
Drops for his king a silent tear,
And feels, perhaps, his loss as deep
As those who clamour when they weep."

Sigvat came home to Norway to the Throndhjem country, where he had a farm and children. He came from the South along the coast in a merchant vessel, and as they lay in Hillarsund they saw a great many ravens flying about. Then Sigvat said:—

"I see here many a croaking raven
Flying about the well-known haven:
When Olaf's ship was floating here,
They knew that food for them was near;
When Olaf's ship lay here wind-bound,
Oft screamed the erne o'er Hillar sound,
Impatient for the expected prey,
And wont to follow to the fray."

When Sigvat came north to the town of Throndhjem King Svein was there before him. He invited Sigvat to stay with him, as Sigvat had formerly been with his father King Canute the Great; but Sigvat said he would first go home to his farm. One day, as Sigvat was walking in the street, he saw the king's men at play, and he sang:—

"One day before I passed this way,
When the king's guards were at their play,
Something there was—I need not tell—
That made me pale, and feel unwell.
Perhaps it was I thought, just then,
How noble Olaf with his men,
In former days, I oft have seen
In manly games upon this green."

Sigvat then went to his farm; and as he heard that many men upbraided him with having deserted King Olaf, he made these verses:—

"May Christ condemn me still to burn
In quenchless fire, if I did turn,
And leave King Olaf in his need,—
My soul is free from such base deed.
I was at Rome, as men know well
Who saw me there, and who can tell
That there in danger I was then:
The truth I need not hide from men."

Sigvat was ill at ease in his home. One day he went out and sang:—

"While Olaf lived, how smiled the land!—
Mountain and cliff, and pebbly strand.
All Norway then, so fresh, so gay,
On land or sea, where oft I lay.
But now to me all seems so dreary,
All black and dull—of life I'm weary:
Cheerless to-day, cheerless to-morrow—
Here in the North we have great sorrow."

Early in winter Sigvat went westward over the ridge of the country to Jamtaland, and onwards to Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod. He went immediately to Queen Astrid, and was with her a long time, and was a welcome guest. He was also with her brother King Emund, and received from him ten marks of proved silver, as is related in the song of Canute. Sigvat always inquired of the merchants who traded to Novgorod if they could tell him any news of Magnus Olafson. Sigvat composed these lines at that time:—

"I ask the merchant oft who drives
His trade to Russia, 'How he thrives,
Our noble prince? How lives he there?'
And still good news—his praise—I hear.
To little birds, which wing their way
Between the lands, I fain would say,
How much we long our prince to see;
They seem to bear a wish from me."

10.—OF KING MAGNUS'S FIRST ARRIVAL IN SVITHJOD.

Immediately after Magnus Olafson came to Svithjod from Russia, Sigvat met him at Queen Astrid's house, and glad they all were at meeting. Sigvat then sang:—

"Thou art come here, prince, young and bold!
Thou art come home! With joy behold
Thy land and people. From this hour
I join myself to thy young power.
I could not o'er to Russia hie,—
Thy mother's guardian here was I.
It was my punishment for giving
Magnus his name, while scarcely living."

Afterwards Sigvat travelled with Queen Astrid, and followed Magnus to Norway. Sigvat sang thus:—

"To the crowds streaming to the Thing,
To see and hear Magnus their king,
Loudly, young king, I'll speak my mind—
'God to His people has been kind.'
If He, to whom be all the praise,
Give us a son in all his ways
Like to his sire, no folk on earth
Will bless so much a royal birth."

Now when Magnus became king of Norway Sigvat attended him, and was his dearest friend. Once it happened that Queen Astrid and Alfhild the king's mother had exchanged some sharp words with each other, and Sigvat said:—

"Alfhild! though it was God's will
To raise thee—yet remember still
The queen-born Astrid should not be
Kept out of due respect by thee."

11.—KING OLAF'S SHRINE.

King Magnus had a shrine made and mounted with gold and silver, and studded with jewels. This shrine was made so that in shape and size it was like a coffin. Under it was an arched way, and above was a raised roof, with a head and a roof-ridge. Behind were plaited hangings; and before were gratings with padlocks, which could be locked with a key. In this shrine King Magnus had the holy remains of King Olaf deposited, and many were the miracles there wrought. Of this Sigvat speaks:—

"For him a golden shrine is made,
For him whose heart was ne'er afraid
Of mortal man—the holy king,
Whom the Lord God to heaven did bring.
Here many a man shall feel his way,
Stone-blind, unconscious of the day,
And at the shrine where Olaf lies
Give songs of praise for opened eyes."

It was also appointed by law that King Olaf's holy day should be held sacred over all Norway, and that day has been kept ever afterwards as the greatest of Church days. Sigvat speaks of it:—

"To Olaf, Magnus' father, raise,
Within my house, the song of praise!
With joy, yet grief, we'll keep the day
Olaf to heaven was called away.

Well may I keep within my breast
A day for him in holy rest,—
My upraised hands a golden ring
On every branch[1] bear from that king."

12.—OF THORER HUND.

Thorer Hund left the country immediately after King Olaf's fall. He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back. Thorer Hund had a son called Sigurd, father of Ranveig who was married to Joan, a son of Arne Arnason. Their children were Vidkun of Bjarkey, Sigurd Hund, Erling, and Jardthrud.

13.—OF THE MURDER OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

Harek of Thjotta sat at home on his farm, till King Magnus Olafson came to the country and was made king. Then Harek went south to Throndhjem to King Magnus. At that time Asmund Grankelson was in the king's house. When Harek came to Nidaros, and landed out of the ship, Asmund was standing with the king in the gallery outside the loft, and both the king and Asmund knew Harek when they saw him. "Now," says Asmund to the king, "I will pay Harek for my father's murder." He had in his hand a little thin hatchet. The king looked at him, and said, "Rather take this axe of mine." It was thick, and made like a club. "Thou must know, Asmund," added he, "that there are hard bones in the old fellow." Asmund took the axe, went down, and through the house, and when he came down to the cross-road Harek and his men coming up met him. Asmund struck Harek on the

[1]The fingers, the branches of the hand, bore golden fruits from the generosity of the king.—L.

head, so that the axe penetrated to the brains; and that was Harek's death-wound. Asmund turned back directly to the king's house, and the whole edge of the axe was turned with the blow. Then said the king, "What would thy axe have done, for even this one, I think, is spoilt?" King Magnus afterwards gave him a fief and office in Halogaland, and many are the tales about the strife between Asmund and Harek's sons.

14.—OF THORGEIR FLEK.

Kalf Arnason had at first, for some time, the greatest share of the government of the country under King Magnus; but afterwards there were people who reminded the king of the part Kalf had taken at Stiklestad, and then it became difficult for Kalf to give the king satisfaction in anything. Once it happened there were many men with the king bringing their affairs before him; and Thorgeir Flek from Sula in Veradal, of whom mention is made before in the history of King Olaf the Saint, came to him about some needful business. The king paid no attention to his words, but was listening to people who stood near him. Then Thorgeir said to the king, so loud that all who were around him could hear—

"Listen, my lord, to my plain word.
I too was there, and had to bear
A bloody head from Stiklestad:
For I was then with Olaf's men.
Listen to me: well did I see
The men you're trusting the dead corpse thrusting
Out of their way, as dead it lay;
And striking o'er your father's gore."

There was instantly a great uproar, and some told Thorgeir to go out; but the king called him, and not only despatched his business to his satisfaction, but promised him favour and friendship.

15.—KALF ARNASON FLIES THE COUNTRY.

Soon after this the king was at a feast at the farm of Haug in Veradel, and at the dinner-table Kalf Arnason sat upon one side of him, and Einar Tambaskelfer on the other. It was already come so far that the king took little notice of Kalf, but paid most attention to Einar. The king said to Einar, "Let us ride to-day to Stiklestad. I should like to see the memorials of the things which took place there." Einar replies, "I can tell thee nothing about it; but take thy foster-father Kalf with thee; he can give thee information about all that took place." When the tables were removed, the king made himself ready, and said to Kalf, "Thou must go with me to Stiklestad."

Kalf replied, "That is really not my duty."

Then the king stood up in a passion, and said, "Go thou shalt, Kalf!" and thereupon he went out.

Kalf put on his riding clothes in all haste, and said to his foot-boy, "Thou must ride directly to Eggja, and order my house-servants to ship all my property on board my ship before sunset."

King Magnus now rides to Stiklestad, and Kalf with him. They alighted from horseback, and went to the place where the battle had been. Then said the king to Kalf, "Where is the spot at which the king fell?"

Kalf stretched out his spear-shaft, and said, "There he lay when he fell."

The king: "And where wast thou, Kalf?"

Kalf: "Here where I am now standing."

The king turned red as blood in the face, and said, "Then thy axe could well have reached him."

Kalf replied, "My axe did not come near him;" and immediately went to his horse, sprang on horseback, and rode away with all his men; and the king rode back to Haug. Kalf did not stop until he got home in the evening to Eggja. There his ship lay ready at the shore side, and all his effects were on board, and the vessel manned with his house-servants. They set off immediately by night down the fjord, and afterwards proceeded day and night, when the wind suited. He sailed out into the West sea, and was there a long time plundering in Ireland, Scotland, and the Hebudes. Bjarne Gullbrarskald tells of this in the song about Kalf:—

"Brother of Thorberg, who still stood
Well with the king! in angry mood
He is the first to break with thee,
Who well deserves esteemed to be;
He is the first who friendship broke,
For envious men the falsehood spoke;
And he will be the first to rue
The breach of friendship 'twixt you two."

16.—OF THE THREATS OF THE BONDES.

King Magnus added to his property Veggia, which Hrut had been owner of, and Kviststad, which had belonged to Thorgeir, and also Eggja, with all the goods which Kalf had left behind him; and thus he confiscated to the king's estate many great farms, which had belonged to those of the bonde-army who had fallen at Stiklestad. In like manner, he laid heavy fines upon many of those who made the greatest opposition to King Olaf. He drove some out of the country, took large sums of money from others, and had the cattle of others slaughtered for his use. Then the bondes began to murmur,

and to say among themselves, "Will he go on in the same way as his father and other chiefs, whom we made an end of when their pride and lawless proceedings became insupportable?" This discontent spread widely through the country. The people of Sogn gathered men, and, it was said, were determined to give battle to King Magnus, if he came into the Fjord district. King Magnus was then in Hordaland, where he had remained a long time with a numerous retinue, and was now come to the resolution to proceed north to Sogn. When the king's friends observed this, twelve men had a meeting, and resolved to determine by casting lots which of them should inform the king of the discontent of the people; and it so happened that the lot fell upon Sigvat.

17.—OF THE FREE-SPEAKING SONG (BERSÖGLISVÍSUR).

Sigvat accordingly composed a poem, which he called the Free-speaking Song, which begins with saying the king had delayed too long to pacify the people, who were threatening to rise in tumult against him. He said:—

"Here in the south, from Sogn is spread
The news that strife draws to a head:
The bondes will the king oppose—
Kings and their folk should ne'er be foes.
Let us take arms, and briskly go
To battle, if it must be so;
Defend our king—but still deplore
His land plunged in such strife once more."

In this song are also these verses:—

"Hakon, who at Fitiar died,—
Hakon the Good, could not abide
The viking rule, or robber train,
And all men's love he thus did gain.
The people since have still in mind
The laws of Hakon, just and kind;
And men will never see the day
When Hakon's laws have passed away.
"The bondes ask but what is fair;
The Olafs and the Earls, when there
Where Magnus sits, confirmed to all
Their lands and gear—to great and small.
Bold Trygve's son, and Harald's heir,
The Olafs, while on earth they were,
Observed the laws themselves had made,
And none was for his own afraid.

"Let not thy counsellors stir thy wrath
Against the man who speaks the truth;
Thy honour lies in thy good sword,
But still more in thy royal word;
And, if the people do not lie,
The new laws turn out not nigh
So just and mild, as the laws given
At Ulfasund in face of heaven.

"Dread king! who urges thee to break
Thy pledged word, and back to take
Thy promise given? Thou warrior bold:
With thy own people word to hold,
Thy promise fully to maintain,
Is to thyself the greatest gain:
The battle-storm raiser he
Must by his own men trusted be.

"Who urges thee, who seek'st renown,
The bondes' cattle to cut down?
No king before e'er took in hand
Such viking-work in his own land.
Such rapine men will not long bear,
And the king's counsellors will but share
In their ill-will: when once inflamed,
The king himself for all is blamed.

"Be cautious, with this news of treason
Flying about—give them no reason.
We hang the thief, but then we use
Consideration of the excuse.
I think, great king (who wilt rejoice
Eagle and wolf with battle voice),
It would be wise not to oppose
Thy bondes, and make them thy foes.

"A dangerous sign it is, I fear,
That old grey-bearded men appear
In corners whispering at the Thing,
As if they had bad news to bring.
The young sit still,—no laugh, or shout,—
More looks than words passing about;
And groups of whispering heads are seen,
On buttoned breasts, with lowering mien.

"Among the udalmen, they say
The king, if he could have his way,
Would seize the bondes' udal land,
And free-born men must this withstand.
In truth the man whose udal field,
By any doom that law can yield
From him adjudged the king would take,
Could the king's throne and power shake.

This verse is the last:—

"A holy bond between us still
Makes me wish speedy end to ill:
The sluggard waits till afternoon,—
At once great Magnus! grant our boon.
Thee we will serve with heart and hand,
With thee we'll fight by sea or land:
With Olaf's sword take Olaf's mind,
And to thy bondes be more kind."

In this song the king was exhorted to observe the laws which his father had established. This exhortation had a good effect on the king, for many others held the same language to him. So at last the king consulted the most prudent men, who ordered all affairs according to law. Thereafter King Magnus had the law-book composed in writing which is still in use in Throndhjem district, and

is called *The Grey Goose*.[1] King Magnus afterwards became very popular, and was beloved by all the country people, and therefore he was called Magnus the Good.

18.—OF THE ENGLISH KINGS.

The king of the English, King Harald, died (1040) five years after his father King Canute, and was buried beside his father at Winchester. After his death his brother Hardaknut, the second son of the old King Canute, was king of England, and was thus king both of Denmark and England. He ruled these kingdoms two years, and then died of sickness in England, leaving no children. He was buried at Winchester beside his father. After his death Edward the Good, a son of the English king Ethelred (and Emma, a daughter of Richard earl of Rouen), was chosen king in England. King Edward the Good was, on his mother's side, a brother of Harald and Hardaknut, the sons of Canute the Great; and the daughter of Canute and Queen Emma was Gunhild, who was married to the Emperor Henry of Germany, who was called Henry the Mild. Gunhild had been three years in Germany when she fell sick, and she died five years after the death of her father King Canute the Great.

[1] *The Grey Goose*, so called probably from the colour of the parchment on which it is written, is one of the most curious relics of the Middle Ages, and give us an unexpected view of the social condition of the Northmen in the eleventh century. Law appears to have been so far advanced among them that the forms were not merely established, but the slightest breach of the legal forms of proceeding involved the loss of the case. *The Grey Goose* embraces subjects not dealt with probably by any other code in Europe at that period. The provision for the poor, the equality of weights and measures, police of markets and of sea havens, provision for illegitimate children of the poor, inns for travellers, wages of servants and support of them in sickness, protection of pregnant women and even of domestic animals from injury, roads, bridges, vagrants, beggars, are subjects treated of in this code.—*Schlegel*.—L.

19.—OF KING MAGNUS OLAFSON.

When King Magnus Olafson heard of Hardaknut's death, he immediately sent people south to Denmark, with a message to the men who had bound themselves by oath to the peace and agreement which was made between King Magnus and Hardaknut, and reminded them of their pledge. He added, as a conclusion, that in summer (1042) he would come with his army to Denmark to take possession of his Danish dominions, in terms of the agreement, or to fall in the field with his army. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

"Wise were the words, exceeding wise,
Of him who stills the hungriest cries
Of beasts of prey—the earl's lord;
And soon fulfilled will be his word:
'With his good sword he'll Denmark gain,
Or fall upon a bloody plain;
And rather than give up his cause,
Will leave his corpse to raven's claws.'"

20.—KING MAGNUS'S ARMAMENT.

Thereafter King Magnus gathered together a great army, and summoned to him all lendermen and powerful bondes, and collected war-ships. When the army was assembled it was very handsome, and well fitted out. He had seventy large vessels when he sailed from Norway. So says Thiodolf the skald:—

"Brave king! the terror of the foe,
With thee will many a long-ship go.
Full seventy sail are gathered here,
Eastward with their great king to steer.
And southward now the bright keel glides;
O'er the white waves the Bison rides.
Sails swell, yards crack, the highest mast
O'er the wide sea scarce seen at last."

Here it related that King Magnus had the great Bison, which his father King Olaf had built. It had more than thirty banks of rowers; and forward on the bow was a

great buffalo head, and aft on the stern-post was its tail. Both the head and the tail, and both sides of the ship, were gilded over. Of this speaks Arnor, the earls' skald:—

"The white foam lashing o'er the deck
Oft made the glided head to shake:
The helm down, the vessel's heel
Oft showed her stem's bright-glacing steel.
Around Stavanger-point careering,
Through the wild sea's white flames steering,
Tackle loud singing to the strain,
The storm-horse flies to Denmark's plain."

King Magnus set out to sea from Agder, and sailed over to Jutland. So says Arnor:—

"I can relate how through the gale
The gallant Bison carried sail,
With her lee gunwale in the wave,
The king on board, Magnus the brave!
The iron-clad Thingmen's chief to see
On Jutland's coast right glad were we,—
Right glad our men to see a king
Who in the fight his sword could swing."

21.—KING MAGNUS COMES TO DENMARK.

When King Magnus came to Denmark he was joyfully received. He appointed a Thing without delay, to which he summoned the people of the country, and desired they would take him as king, according to the agreement which had been entered into. As the highest of the chiefs of the country were bound by oath to King Magnus, and were desirous of keeping their word and oath, they endeavoured zealously to promote the cause with the people. It contributed also that King Canute the Great, and all his descendants, were dead; and a third assistance was, that his father King Olaf's sanctity and miracles were become celebrated in all countries.

22.—KING MAGNUS CHOSEN KING OF DENMARK.

King Magnus afterwards ordered the people to be summoned to Viborg to a Thing. Both in older and later

times, the Danes elected their kings at the Viborg Thing. At this Thing the Danes chose Magnus Olafson to be king of all the Danish dominions. King Magnus remained long in Denmark during the summer (1042); and wherever he came the people received him joyfully, and obeyed him willingly. He divided the country into baronies and districts, and gave fiefs to men of power in the land. Late in autumn he returned with his fleet to Norway, but lay for some time at the Gaut river.

23.—OF SVEIN ULFSON.

There was a man, by name Svein, a son of Earl Ulf, and grandson of Thorgils Sprakaleg. Svein's mother was Astrid, a daughter of King Svein Forkbeard. She was a sister of Canute the Great by the father's side, and of the Swedish King Olaf Eirikson by the mother's side; for her mother was Queen Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglar Toste. Svein Ulfson had been a long time living with his relation the Swedish king, ever since King Canute had ordered his father Ulf to be killed, as is related in the saga of old King Canute,—that he had his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, murdered in Roskilde; and on which account Svein had not since been in Denmark. Svein Ulfson was one of the handsomest men that could be seen; he was very stout and strong, and very expert in all exercises, and a well-spoken man withal. Every one who knew him said he had every quality which became a good chief. Svein Ulfson waited upon King Magnus while he lay in the Gaut river, as before mentioned, and the king received him kindly, as he was by many advised

to do; for Svein was a particularly popular man. He could also speak for himself to the king well and cleverly; so that it came at last to Svein's entering into King Magnus's service, and becoming his man. They often talked together afterwards in private concerning many affairs.

24.—SVEIN ULFSON CREATED AN EARL.

One day, as King Magnus sat in his high-seat and many people were around him, Svein Ulfson sat upon a footstool before the king. The king then made a speech: —"Be it known to you, chiefs, and the people in general, that I have taken the following resolution. Here is a distinguished man, both for family and for his own merits, Svein Ulfson, who has entered into my service, and given me promise of fidelity. Now, as ye know, the Danes have this summer become my men, so that when I am absent from the country it is without a head; and it is not unknown to you how it is ravaged by the people of Vindland, Kurland, and others from the Baltic, as well as by Saxons. Therefore I promised them a chief who could defend and rule their land; and I know no man better fitted, in all respects, for this than Svein Ulfson, who is of birth to be chief of the country. I will therefore make him my earl, and give him the government of my Danish dominions while I am in Norway; just as King Canute the Great set his father, Earl Ulf, over Denmark while he was in England."

Then Einar Tambaskelfer said, "Too great an earl—too great an earl, my foster-son!"

The king replied in a passion, "Ye have a poor opinion

of my judgment, I think. Some consider that ye are too great earls, and others that ye are fit for nothing."

Then the king stood up, took a sword, and girt it on the earl's loins, and took a shield and fastened it on his shoulders, put a helmet upon his head, and gave him the title of earl, with the same fiefs in Denmark which his father Earl Ulf had formerly held. Afterwards a shrine was brought forth containing holy relics, and Svein laid his hand hereon, and swore the oath of fidelity to King Magnus; upon which the king led the earl to the high-seat by his side. So says Thiodolf:—

"'Twas at the Gaut river's shore,
With hand on shrine Svein Ulfson swore.
King Magnus first said o'er the oath,
With which Svein Ulfson pledged his troth.
The vows by Svein solemnly given,
On holy bones of saints in heaven,
To Magnus seemed both fair and fast:
He found they were too fair to last."

Earl Svein went thereafter to Denmark, and the whole nation received him well. He established a court about him, and soon became a great man. In winter (1043), he went much about the country, and made friends among the powerful chiefs; and, indeed, he was beloved by all the people of the land.

25.—KING MAGNUS'S FORAY.

King Magnus proceeded northward to Norway with his fleet, and wintered there; but when the spring set in (1043) he gathered a large force, with which he sailed south to Denmark, having heard the news from Vindland that the Vindland people in Jomsborg had withdrawn from their submission to him. The Danish kings had formerly had a very large earldom there, and they first founded

Jomsborg; and now the place was become a very strong fortress. When King Magnus heard of this, he ordered a large fleet and army to be levied in Denmark, and sailed in summer to Vindland with all his forces, which made a very large army altogether. Arnor, the earls' skald, tells of it thus:—

"Now in this strophe, royal youth!
I tell no more than the plain truth.
Thy armed outfit from the strand
Left many a keel-trace on the sand,
And never did a king before
So many ships to any shore
Lead on, as thou to Vindland's isle;
The Vindland men in fright recoil."

Now when King Magnus came to Vindland he attacked Jomsborg, and soon took the fortress, killing many people, burning and destroying both in the town and in the country all around, and making the greatest havoc. So says Arnor, the earl's skald:—

"The robbers, hemmed 'twixt death and fire,
Knew not how to escape thy ire;
O'er Jomsborg castle's highest towers
Thy wrath the whirlwind-fire pours.
The heathen on his false gods calls,
And trembles even in their halls;
And by the light from its own flame
The king this viking-hold o'ercame."

Many people in Vindland submitted to King Magnus, but many more got out of the way and fled. King Magnus returned to Denmark, and prepared to take his winter abode there, and sent away the Danish, and also a great many of the Norwegian people he had brought with him.

26.—SVEIN RECEIVES THE TITLE OF KING.

The same winter (1043), in which Svein Ulfson was raised to the government of the whole Danish dominions, and had made friends of a great number of the principal chiefs in Denmark, and obtained the affections of the people, he assumed by the advice of many of the chiefs the title of king. But when in the spring thereafter he heard

that King Magnus had come from the north with a great army, Svein went over to Scania, from thence up to Gautland, and so on to Svithjod to his relation, King Emund, where he remained all summer, and sent spies out to Denmark, to inquire about the king's proceedings and the number of his men. Now when Svein heard that King Magnus had let a great part of his army go away, and also that he was south in Jutland, he rode from Svithjod with a great body of people which the Swedish king had given him. When Svein came to Scania the people of that country received him well, treated him as their king, and men joined him in crowds. He then went on to Seeland, where he was also well received, and the whole country joined him. He then went to Fyen, and laid all the islands under his power; and as the people also joined him, he collected a great army and many ships of war.

27.—OF KING MAGNUS'S MILITARY FORCE.

King Magnus heard this news, and at the same time that the people of Vindland had a large force on foot. He summoned people therefore to come to him, and drew together a great army in Jutland. Otto, also, the Duke of Brunsvik, who had married Ulfhild, King Olaf the Saint's daughter, and the sister of King Magnus, came to him with a great troop. The Danish chiefs pressed King Magnus to advance against the Vindland army, and not allow pagans to march over and lay waste the country; so it was resolved that the king with his army should proceed south to Heidaby. While King Magnus lay at Skotborg river, on Hlyrskog Heath, he got intelligence con-

cerning the Vindland army, and that it was so numerous it could not be counted; whereas King Magnus had so few, that there seemed no chance for him but to fly. The king, however, determined on fighting, if there was any possibility of gaining the victory; but the most dissuaded him from venturing on an engagement, and all, as one man, said that the Vindland people had undoubtedly a prodigious force. Duke Otto, however, pressed much to go to battle. Then the king ordered the whole army to be gathered by the war trumpets into battle array, and ordered all the men to arm, and to lie down for the night under their shields; for he was told the enemy's army had come to the neighbourhood. The king was very thoughtful; for he was vexed that he should be obliged to fly, which fate he had never experienced before. He slept but little all night, and chanted his prayers.

28.—OF KING OLAF'S MIRACLE.

The following day was Michaelmas eve. Towards dawn the king slumbered, and dreamt that his father, King Olaf the Saint, appeared to him, and said, "Art thou so melancholy and afraid, because the Vindland people come against thee with a great army? Be not afraid of heathens, although they be many; for I shall be with thee in the battle. Prepare, therefore, to give battle to the Vindlanders, when thou hearest my trumpet." When the king awoke he told his dream to his men, and the day was then dawning. At that moment all the people heard a ringing of bells in the air; and those among King Magnus's men who had been in Nidaros thought that it was the

ringing of the bell called Glod, which King Olaf had presented to the church of Saint Clement in the town of Nidaros.

29.—BATTLE OF HLYRSKOG HEATH.

Then King Magnus stood up, and ordered the war trumpets to sound, and at that moment the Vindland army advanced from the south across the river against him; on which the whole of the king's army stood up, and advanced against the heathens. King Magnus threw off from him his coat of ring-mail, and had a red silk shirt outside over his clothes, and had in his hands the battle-axe called Hel[1], which had belonged to King Olaf. King Magnus ran on before all his men to the enemy's army, and instantly hewed down with both hands every man who came against him. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

"His armour on the ground he flung
His broad axe round his head he swung;
And Norway's king strode on in might,
Through ringing swords, to the wild fight.
His broad axe Hel with both hands wielding,
Shields, helms, and skulls before it yielding,
He seemed with Fate the world to share,
And life or death to deal out there."

This battle was not very long; for the king's men were very fiery, and where they came the Vindland men fell as thick as tangles heaped up by the waves on the strand. They who stood behind betook themselves to flight, and were hewed down like cattle at a slaughter. The king himself drove the fugitives eastward over the heath, and people fell all over the moor. So says Thiodolf:—

"And foremost he pursued,
And the flying foe down hewed;
An eagle's feast each stroke,
As the Vindland helms he broke.
He drove them o'er the heath,
And they fly from bloody death;
But the moor, a mile or more,
With the dead was studded o'er."

[1]Hel—Death; the goddess of Death.—L.

It is a common saying, that there never was so great a slaughter of men in the northern lands, since the time of Christianity, as took place among the Vindland people on Hlyrskog's Heath. On the other side, not many of King Magnus's people were killed, although many were wounded. After the battle the king ordered the wounds of his men to be bound; but there were not so many doctors in the army as were necessary, so the king himself went round, and felt the hands of those he thought best suited for the business; and when he had thus stroked their palms he named twelve men, who, he thought, had the softest hands, and told them to bind the wounds of the people; and although none of them had ever tried it before, they all became afterwards the best of doctors. There were two Iceland men among them; the one was Thorkil, a son of Geire, from Lyngar; the other was Atle, father of Bard Svarte of Selardal, from whom many good doctors are descended. After this battle, the report of the miracle which King Olaf the Saint had worked was spread widely through the country; and it was the common saying of the people, that no man could venture to fight against King Magnus Olafson, for his father Saint Olaf stood so near to him that his enemies, on that account, never could do him harm.

30.—BATTLE AT RE.

King Magnus immediately turned round with his army against Svein, whom he called his earl, although the Danes called him their king; and he collected ships, and a great force, and on both sides a great strength was assembled.

In Svein's army were many chiefs from Scania, Halland, Seeland, and Fyen; while King Magnus, on the other hand, had mostly Norway and Jutland men, and with that war-force he hastened to meet Svein. They met at Re, near Vestland; and there was a great battle, which ended in King Magnus gaining the victory, and Svein taking flight. After losing many people, Svein fled back to Scania, and from thence to Gautland, which was a safe refuge if he needed it, and stood open to him. King Magnus returned to Jutland, where he remained all winter (1044) with many people, and had a guard to watch his ships. Arnor, the earls' skald, speaks of this:—

"At Re our battle-loving lord
In bloody meeting stained his sword,—
At Re, upon the western shore,
In Vestland warrior's blood once more."

31.—BATTLE AT AROS.

Svein Ulfson went directly to his ships as soon as he heard that King Magnus had left his fleet. He drew to him all the men he could, and went round in winter among the islands, Seeland, Fyen, and others. Towards Yule he sailed to Jutland, and went into Limfjord, where many people submitted to him. He imposed scat upon some, but some joined King Magnus. Now when King Magnus heard what Svein was doing, he betook himself to his ships with all the Northmen then in Denmark, and a part of the Danish troops, and steered south along the land. Svein was then in Aros with a great force; and when he heard of King Magnus he laid his vessels without the town, and prepared for battle. When King Magnus heard for certain where Svein was, and that the distance

between them was but short, he held a House-thing, and addressed his people thus: "It is reported to me that the earl and his fleet are lying not far from us, and that he has many people. Now I would let you know that I intend to go out against the earl and fight for it, although we have fewer people. We will, as formerly, put our trust in God, and Saint Olaf, my father, who has given us victory sometimes when we fought, even though we had fewer men than the enemy. Now I would have you get ready to seek out the enemy, and give battle the moment we find him by rowing all to attack, and being all ready for battle." Thereupon the men put on their weapons, each man making himself and his place ready; and then they stretched themselves to their oars. When they saw the earl's ships they rowed towards them, and made ready to attack. When Svein's men saw the forces they armed themselves, bound their ships together, and then began one of the sharpest of battles. So says Thiodolf, the skald:—

"Shield against shield, the earl and king
Made shields and swords together ring.
The gold-decked heroes made a play
Which Hild's iron-shirt men say
They never saw before or since
On battle-deck: the brave might wince,
As spear and arrow whistling flew,
Point blank, death-bringing, quick and true."

They fought at the bows, so that the men only on the bows could strike; the men on the forecastle thrust with spears; and all who were farther off shot with light spears or javelins, or war-arrows. Some fought with stones, or short stakes; and those who were aft of the mast shot with the bow. So Says Thiodolf:—

"Steel-pointed spear, and sharpened stake.
Made the broad shield on arm shake:
The eagle, hovering in the air,
Screamed o'er the prey preparing there.
And stones and arrows thickly flew,
And many a warrior bold they slew.

The bowman never twanged his bow
And drew his shaft so oft as now;
And Throndhjem's bowmen on that day
Were not first tired of this play:
Arrows and darts so quickly fly,
You could not follow with the eye."

Here it appears how hot the battle was with casting weapons. King Magnus stood in the beginning of the battle within a shield-rampart; but as it appeared to him that matters were going on too slowly, he leaped over the shields, and rushed forward in the ship, encouraging his men with a loud cheer, and springing to the bows, where the battle was going on hand to hand. When his men saw this they urged each other on with mutual cheering, and there was one great hurrah through all the ships. So says Thiodolf:—

"'On with our ships! on to the foe!'
Cry Magnus' men—on, on they go.
Spears against shields in fury rattle,—
Was never seen so fierce a battle."

And now the battle was exceedingly sharp; and in the assault Svein's ship was cleared of all her forecastle men upon and on both sides of the forecastle. Then Magnus boarded Svein's ship, followed by his men; and one after the other came up, and made so stout an assault that Svein's men gave way, and King Magnus first cleared that ship, and then the rest, one after the other. Svein fled, with a great part of his people; but many fell, and many got life and peace. Thiodolf tells of this:—

"Brave Magnus, from the stern springing
On to the stem, where swords were ringing
From his sea-raven's beak of gold
Deals death around—the brave! the bold!
The earl's housemen now begin
To shrink and fall: their ranks grow thin—
The king's luck thrives—their decks are cleared,
Of fighting men no more appeared.
The earl's ships are driven to flight,
Before the king would stop the fight:
The gold-distributor first then
Gave quarters to the vanquished men."

This battle was fought on the last Sunday before Yule. So says Thiodolf:—

"'Twas on a Sunday morning bright,
Fell out this great and bloody fight,
When men were arming, fighting, dying,
Or on the red decks wounded lying.
And many a man, foredoomed to die,
To save his life o'erboard did fly,
But sank; for swimming could not save,
And dead men rolled in every wave."

Magnus took seven ships from Svein's people. So says Thiodolf:—

"Thick Olaf's son seven vessels cleared,
And with his fleet the prizes steered.
The Norway girls will not be sad
To hear such news—each from her lad."

He also sings:—

"The captured men will grieve the most
Svein and their comrades to have lost;
For it went ill with those who fled,
Their wounded had no easy bed.
A heavy storm that very night
O'ertook them flying from the fight;
And skulls and bones are tumbling round,
Under the sea, on sandy ground."

Svein fled immediately by night to Seeland, with the men who had escaped and were inclined to follow him; but King Magnus brought his ships to the shore, and sent his men up the country in the night-time, and early in the morning they came down to the strand with a great booty in cattle. Thiodolf tells about it:—

"But yesterday with heavy stones
We crushed their skulls, and broke their bones,
And thinned their ranks; and now to-day
Up through their land we've ta'en our way,
And driven their cattle to the shore,
And filled our ships with food in store.
To save his land from our quick swords,
Svein will need something more than words."

32.—SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

King Magnus sailed with his fleet from the south after Svein to Seeland; but as soon as the king came there Svein fled up the country with his men, and Magnus followed them, and pursued the fugitives, killing all that were laid hold of. So says Thiodolf:—

"The Seeland girl asks with fear,
'Whose blood-bespattered shield and spear—
The earl's or king's—up from the shore
Moved on with many a warrior more?'
We scoured through all their muddy lanes,
Woodlands, and fields, and miry plains.
Their hasty footmarks in the clay
Showed that to Ringsted led their way.

"Spattered with mud from heel to head,
Our gallant lord his true men led.
Will Lund's earl halt his hasty flight,
And try on land another fight?
His banner yesterday was seen,
The sand-hills and green trees between,
Through moss and mire to the strand,
In arrow flight, leaving the land."

Then Svein fled over to Fyen Island, and King Magnus carried fire and sword through Seeland, and burnt all round, because their men had joined Svein's troop in harvest. So says Thiodolf:—

"As Svein in winter had destroyed
The royal house, the king employed
No little force to guard the land,
And the earl's forays to withstand.
An armed band one morn he found,
And so beset them round and round,
That Canute's nephew quickly fled,
Or he would have been captive led.
'Our Throndhjem king in his just ire
Laid waste the land with sword and fire,
Burnt every house, and over all
Struck terror into great and small.
To the earl's friends he well repaid
Their deadly hate—such wild work made
On them and theirs, that from his fury,
Flying for life, away they hurry."

33.—BURNING IN FYEN.

As soon as King Magnus heard that Svein with his troops had gone across to Fyen, he sailed after them; and when Svein heard this news he went on board ship and sailed to Scania, and from thence to Gautland, and at last to the Swedish King. King Magnus landed in Fyen, and plundered and burned over all; and all of Svein's men who came there fled far enough. Thiodolf speaks of it thus:—

"Fiona isle, once green and fair,
Lies black and reeking through the air:
The red fog rises, thick and hot,
From burning farm and smouldering cot.
The gaping thralls in terror gaze
On the broad upward-spiring blaze,
From thatched roofs and oak-built walls,
Their murdered masters' stately halls.
"Svein's men, my girl, will not forget
That thrice they have the Norsemen met,
By sea, by land, with steel, with fire,
Thrice have they felt the Norse king's ire.
Fiona's maids are slim and fair,
The lovely prizes, lads, we'll share:
Some stand to arms in rank and row,
Some seize, bring off, and fend with blow."

After this the people of Denmark submitted to King Magnus, and during the rest of the winter, there was peace. King Magnus then appointed some of his men to govern Denmark; and when spring was advanced he sailed northwards with his fleet to Norway, where he remained a great part of the summer.

34.—BATTLE AT HELGANES.

Now, when Svein heard that King Magnus had gone to Norway he rode straight down, and had many people out of Svithjod with him. The people of Scania received him well, and he again collected an army, with which he first crossed over into Seeland and seized upon it and Fyen, and all the other isles. When King Magnus heard of this he gathered together men and ships, and sailed to Denmark; and as soon as he knew where Svein was lying with his ships King Magnus sailed to meet him. They met at a place called Helganes, and the battle began about the fall of day. King Magnus had fewer men, but larger and better equipt vessels. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

"At Helganes—so goes the tale—
The brave wolf-feeder, under sail,
Made many an ocean-elk[1] his prey,
Seized many a ship ere break of day.
When twilight fell he urged the fight,
Close combat—man to man all night;
Through a long harvest night's dark hours,
Down poured the battle's iron showers."

The battle was very hot, and as night advanced the fall of men was great. King Magnus, during the whole night, threw hand-spears. Thiodolf speaks of this:—

"And there at Helganes sunk down,
Sore wounded, men of great renown;
And Svein's retainers lost all heart,
Ducking before the flying dart.
The Norsemen's king let fly his spears,
His death-wounds adding to their fears;
For each spear-blade was wet all o'er,
Up to the shaft in their life-gore."

[1]Ship.—L.

To make a short tale, King Magnus won the victory in this battle, and Svein fled. His ship was cleared of men from stem to stern; and it went so on board many others of his ships. So says Thiodolf:—

"Earl Svein fled from the empty deck,
His lonely ship an unmann'd wreck;
Magnus the Good, the people's friend,
Pressed to the death on the false Svein.

Hneiter,[1] the sword his father bore,
Was edge and point, stained red with gore:
Swords sprinkle blood o'er armour bright,
When kings for land and power fight."

And Arnor says:—

"The cutters of Bjorn's own brother
Soon changed their owner for another;

The king took them and all their gear:
The crews, however, got off clear."

A great number of Svein's men fell, and King Magnus and his men had a vast booty to divide. So says Thiodolf:—

"Where the Norsemen the Danish slew,
A Gautland shield and breast-plate true
Fell to my share of spoil by lot;
And something more i' the south I got:

(There all the summer swords were ringing)
A helm, gay arms, and gear worth bringing,
Home to my quiet lovely one
I sent—with news how we had won."

Svein fled up to Scania with all the men who escaped with him; and King Magnus and his people drove the fugitives up through the country without meeting any opposition either from Svein's men or the bondes. So says Thiodolf:—

"Olaf's brave son then gave command,
All his ships' crews should quickly land:
King Magnus, marching at their head,
A noble band of warriors led.

A foray through the land he makes;
Denmark in every quarter shakes.
Up hill and down the horses scour,
Carrying the Danes from Norsemen's power."

King Magnus drove with fire and sword through the land. So says Thiodolf:—

[1]This was the name of Saint Olaf's sword, which Magnus had recovered.—L.

"And now the Norsemen storm
along,
Following their banner in a throng:
King Magnus' banner flames on high,
A star to guide our roaming by.
To Lund, o'er Scania's peaceful
field,
My shoulder bore my useless shield:
A fairer land, a better road,
As friend or foe, I never trod."

They began to burn the habitations all around, and the people fled on every side. So says Thiodolf:—

"Our ice-cold iron in great store,
Our arms, beside the king we bore:
The Scanian rogues fly at the view
Of men and steel all sharp and true.
Their timbered houses flame on
high,
Red flashing over half the sky;
The blazing town flings forth its
light,
Lighting the cowards on their flight."

And he also sang:—

"The king o'er all the Danish land
Roams, with his fire-bringing band:
The house, the hut, the farm, the
town,
All where men dwelt is burned down.
O'er Denmark's plains and corn-
fields,
Meadows and moors, are seen our
shields:
Victorious over all, we chase
Svein's wounded men from place to
place.
"Across Fiona's moor again,
The paths late trodden by our men
We tread once more, until quite near,
Through morning mist, the foes ap-
pear.
Then up our numerous banners flare
In the cold early morning air;
And they from Magnus' power who
fly
Cannot his quick war-work deny."

Then Svein fled eastwards along Scania, and King Magnus returned to his ships, and steered eastwards also along the Scanian coast, having got ready with the greatest haste to sail. Thiodolf sings thus about it:—

"No drink but the salt sea
On board our ships had we,
When, following our king,
On board our ships we spring.
Hard work on the salt sea,
Off Scania's coast, had we;
But we laboured for the king,
To his foemen death to bring."

Svein fled to Gautland, and then sought refuge with the Swedish king, with whom he remained all winter (1046), and was treated with great respect.

35.—OF KING MAGNUS'S CAMPAIGN.

When King Magnus had subdued Scania he turned about, and first went to Falster, where he landed, plun-

dered, and killed many people who had before submitted to Svein. Arnor speaks of this:—

"A bloody vengeance for their guile
King Magnus takes on Falster Isle;
The treacherous Danes his fury feel,
And fall before his purpled steel.
The battle-field is covered o'er,
With eagle's prey from shore to shore;
And the king's courtmen were the first
To quench with blood the raven's thirst."

Thereafter Magnus with his fleet proceeded to the isle of Fyen, went on land, plundered, and made great devastation. So says Arnor, the earls' skald:—

"To fair Fiona's grassy shore
His banner now again he bore:
He who the mail-shirt's linked chains
Severs, and all its lustre stains,—
He will be long remembered there,
The warrior in his twentieth year,
Whom their black ravens from afar
Saluted as he went to war."

36.—OF KING MAGNUS'S BATTLES.

King Magnus remained in Denmark all that winter (1046), and sat in peace. He had held many battles, and had gained the victory in all. So says Od Kikinaskald:—

"'Fore Michaelmas was struck the blow
That laid the Vindland vikings low;
And people learned with joy to hear
The clang of arms, and leaders' cheer.
Short before Yule fell out the day,
Southward of Aros, where the fray,
Though not enough the foe to quell.
Was of the bloodiest men can tell."

And Arnor says:—

"Olaf's avenger who can sing?
The skald cannot o'ertake the king,
Who makes the war-bird daily drain
The corpse-blood of his foemen slain.
Four battles won within a year,—
Breaker of shields! with sword and spear,
And hand to hand, exalt thy fame
Above the kings of greatest name."

King Magnus had three battles with Svein Ulfson. So says Thiodolf:—

"To our brave Throndhjem sovereign's praise
The skald may all his skaldcraft raise;
For fortune, and for daring deed,
His song will not the truth exceed.
After three battles to regain
What was his own, unjustly ta'en,
Unjustly kept, and dues denied,
He levied dues in red-blood dyed."

37.—OF KING MAGNUS, AND THORFIN AND RAGNVALD, EARLS OF ORKNEY.

While King Magnus the Good, a son of King Olaf the Saint, ruled over Norway, as before related, the Earl Ragnvald Brusason lived with him. Earl Thorfin Sigurdson, the uncle of Ragnvald, ruled then over Orkney. King Magnus sent Ragnvald west to Orkney, and ordered that Thorfin should let him have his father's heritage. Thorfin let Ragnvald have a third part of the land along with him; for so had Bruse, the father of Ragnvald, had it at his dying day. Earl Thorfin was married to Ingebjorg, the earl-mother, who was a daughter of Fin Arnason. Earl Ragnvald thought he should have two-thirds of the land, as Olaf the Saint had promised to his father Bruse, and as Bruse had enjoyed as long as Olaf lived. This was the origin of a great strife between these relations, concerning which we have a long saga. They had a great battle in Pentland Firth, in which Kalf Arnason was with Earl Thorfin. So says Bjarne Gullbrarskald:—

"Thy cutters, dashing through the tide,
Brought aid to Earl Thorfin's side,
Fin's son-in-law, and people say
Thy aid made Bruse's son give way.
Kalf, thou art fond of warlike toil,
Gay in the strife and bloody broil;
But here 'twas hate made thee contend
Against Earl Ragnvald, the king's friend."

38.—OF KING MAGNUS'S LETTER TO ENGLAND.

King Magnus ruled then both over Denmark and Norway; and when he had got possession of the Danish dominions he sent ambassadors over to England to King Edward, who brought to him King Magnus's letter and seal. And in this letter there stood, along with a salutation from

King Magnus, these words:—"Ye must have heard of the agreement which I and Hardaknut made,—that he of us two who survived the other should have all the land and people which the deceased had possessed. Now it has so turned out, as ye have no doubt heard, that I have taken the Danish dominions as my heritage after Hardaknut. But before he departed this life he had England as well as Denmark; therefore I consider myself now, in consequence of my rights by this agreement, to own England also. Now I will therefore that thou deliver to me the kingdom; otherwise I will seek to take it by arms, both from Denmark and Norway; and let him rule the land to whom fate gives the victory."

39.—KING EDWARD'S ANSWER TO KING MAGNUS'S LETTER.

Now when King Edward had read this letter, he replied thus: "It is known to all men in this country that King Ethelred, my father, was udal-born to this kingdom, both after the old and new law of inheritance. We were four sons after him; and when he by death left the throne my brother Edmund took the government and kingdom; for he was the oldest of us brothers, and I was well satisfied that it was so. And after him my stepfather, Canute the Great, took the kingdom, and as long as he lived there was no access to it. After him my brother Harald was king as long as he lived; and after him my brother Hardaknut took the kingdoms both of Denmark and England; for he thought that a just brotherly division that he should have both England and Denmark, and that I should have no kingdom at all. Now he died, and then it was the resolu-

tion of all the people of the country to take me for king here in England. So long as I had no kingly title I served my superiors in all respects, like those who had no claims by birth to land or kingdom. Now, however, I have received the kingly title, and am consecrated king. I have established my royal dignity and authority, as my father before me; and while I live I will not renounce my title. If King Magnus come here with an army, I will gather no army against him; but he shall only get the opportunity of taking England when he has taken my life. Tell him these words of mine." The ambassadors went back to King Magnus, and told him the answer to their message. King Magnus reflected a while, and answered thus: "I think it wisest, and will succeed best, to let King Edward have his kingdom in peace for me, and that I keep the kingdoms God has put into my hands."

SAGA OF HARALD HARDRADE.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Harald, son of Sigurd Syr, was born in the year 1015, and left Norway 1030. He was called Hardrade, that is, the severe counsellor, the tyrant, though the Icelanders never applied this epithet to him. Harald helped the Icelanders in the famine of 1056, and sent them timber for a church at Thingvol. It was the Norwegians who gave him the name tyrant in contrast to the *debonnairetć* of Magnus. He came to Norway in 1046, and became sole king in 1047. He died in 1066, and his son and successor Magnus died in 1069.

His saga is to be compared with *Agrip*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Morkinskinna*.

The skalds quoted are: Thioldolf, Bolverk, Illuge Bryndalaskald, Stuf the skald, Thorarin Skeggjason, Valgard o' Val, Od Kikinaskald, Grane Skald, Thorleik the Fair, Stein Herdison, Ulf the Marshal, Arnor the earls' skald, Thorkel Skallason, and King Harald Hardrade himself.

1.—HARALD ESCAPES FROM THE BATTLE OF STIKLESTAD.

Harald, son of Sigurd Syr, brother of Olaf the Saint, by the same mother, was at the battle of Stiklestad, and was fifteen years old when King Olaf the Saint fell, as was before related. Harald was wounded, and escaped with other fugitives. So says Thiodolf:—

"At Haug the fire-sparks from his shield
Flew round the king's head on the field,
As blow for blow, for Olaf's sake,
His sword and shield would give and take.
Bulgaria's conqueror, I ween,
Had scarcely fifteen winters seen,
When from hs murdered brother's side
His unhelmed head he had to hide."

Ragnvald Brusason led Harald from the battle, and the

night after the fray took him to a bonde who dwelt in a forest far from other people. The peasant received Harald, and kept him concealed; and Harald was waited upon until he was quite cured of his wounds. Then the bonde's son attended him on the way east over the ridge of the land, and they went by all the forest paths they could, avoiding the common road. The bonde's son did not know who it was he was attending; and as they were riding together between two uninhabited forests, Harald made these verses:—

"My wounds were bleeding as I rode;
And down below the bondes strode,
Killing the wounded with the sword,
The followers of their rightful lord.

From wood to wood I crept along,
Unnoticed by the bonde-throng;
'Who knows,' I thought, 'a day may come
My name will yet be great at home.'"

He went eastward over the ridge through Jamtaland and Helsingjaland, and came to Svithjod, where he found Ragnvald Brusason, and many others of King Olaf's men who had fled from the battle at Stiklestad, and they remained there till winter was over.

2.—HARALD'S JOURNEY TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

The spring after (1031) Harald and Ragnvald got ships, and went east in summer to Russia to King Jarisleif, and were with him all the following winter. So says the skald Bolverk:—

"The king's sharp sword lies clean and bright,
Prepared in foreign lands to fight:
Our ravens croak to have their fill,
The wolf howls from the distant hill.

Our brave king is to Russia gone,—
Braver than he on earth there's none:
His sharp sword will carve many a feast
To wolf and raven in the East."

King Jarisleif gave Harald and Ragnvald a kind reception, and made Harald and Eilif, the son of Earl Ragn-

vald, chiefs over the land-defence men of the king. So says Thiodolf:—

"Where Eilif was, one heart and hand
The two chiefs had in their command;
In wedge or line their battle order
Was ranged by both without disorder.
The eastern Vindland men they drove
Into a corner; and they move
The Lesians, although ill at ease,
To take the laws their conquerors please."

Harald remained several years in Russia, and travelled far and wide in the Eastern land. Then he began his expedition out to Greece, and had a great suite of men with him; and on he went to Constantinople. So says Bolverk:—

"Before the cold sea-curling blast
The cutter from the land flew past,
Her black yards swinging to and fro,
Her shield-hung gunwale dipping low.
The king saw glancing o'er the bow
Constantinople's metal glow
From tower and roof, and painted sails
Gliding past towns and wooded vales."

3.—OF HARALD.

At that time the Greek empire was ruled by the Empress Zoe the Great, and with her Michael Catalactus. Now when Harald came to Constantinople he presented himself to the empress, and went into her pay; and immediately, in autumn, went on board the galleys manned with troops which went out to the Greek sea. Harald had his own men along with him. Now Harald had been but a short time in the army before all the Varings flocked to him, and they all joined together when there was a battle. It thus came to pass that Harald was made chief of the Varings. There was a chief over all the troops who was called Gyrger, and who was a relation of the empress. Gyrger and Harald went round among all the Greek islands, and fought much against the corsairs.

4.—OF HARALD AND GYRGER CASTING LOTS.

It happened once that Gyrger and the Varings were going through the country, and they resolved to take their night quarters in a wood; and as the Varings came first to the ground, they chose the place which was best for pitching their tents upon, which was the highest ground; for it is the nature of the land there to be soft when rain falls, and therefore it is bad to choose a low situation for your tents. Now when Gyrger, the chief of the army, came up, and saw where the Varings had set up their tents, he told them to remove, and pitch their tents elsewhere, saying he would himself pitch his tents on their ground. Harald replies, "If ye come first to the night quarter, ye take up your ground, and we must go pitch our tents at some other place where we best can. Now do ye so, in the same way, and find a place where ye will. It is, I think, the privilege of us Varings here in the dominions of the Greek emperor to be free, and independent of all but their own commanders, and bound only to serve the emperor and empress." They disputed long and hotly about this, and both sides armed themselves, and were on the way to fight for it; but men of understanding came between and separated them. They said it would be better to come to an agreement about such questions, so that in future no dispute could arise. It came thus to an arbitration between them, at which the best and most sagacious men should give their judgment in the case. At this arbitration it was determined, with the consent of all parties, that lots should be thrown into a box, and the Greeks and Varings should draw which was first to ride, or to

row, or to take place in a harbour, or to choose tent ground; and each side should be satisfied with what the drawing of the lots gave them. Accordingly the lots were made and marked. Harald said to Gyrger, "Let me see what mark thou hast put upon thy lot, that we may not both mark our lots in the same way." He did so. Then Harald marked his lot, and put it into the box along with the other. The man who was to draw out the lots then took up one of the lots between his fingers, held it up in the air, and said, "This lot shall be the first to ride, and to row, and to take place in harbour and on the tent field." Harald seized his hand, snatched the die, and threw it into the sea, and called out, "That was our lot!" Gyrger said, "Why did you not let other people see it?" Harald replies, "Look at the one remaining in the box,—there you see your own mark upon it." Accordingly the lot which was left behind was examined, and all men saw that Gyrger's mark was upon it, and accordingly the judgment was given that the Varings had gained the first choice in all they had been quarrelling about. There were many things they quarrelled about, but the end always was that Harald got his own way.

5.—HARALD'S EXPEDITION IN THE LAND OF THE SARACENS (SERKLAND).

They went out all on a campaign in summer. When the whole army was thus assembled Harald kept his men out of the battle, or wherever he saw the least danger, under pretext of saving his men; but where he was alone with his own men only, he fought so desperately that they

must either come off victorious or die. It thus happened often that when he commanded the army he gained victories, while Gyrger could do nothing. The troops observed this, and insisted they would be more successful if Harald alone was chief of the whole army, and upbraided the general with never effecting anything, neither himself, nor his people. Gyrger again said that the Varings would give him no assistance, and ordered Harald to go with his men somewhere else, and he, with the rest of his army, would win what they could. Harald accordingly left the army with the Varings and the Latin men, and Gyrger on his side went off with the Greek troops. Then it was seen what each could do. Harald always gained victories and booty; but the Greeks went home to Constantinople with their army, all except a few brave men, who, to gain booty and money, joined themselves to Harald, and took him for their leader. He then went with his troops westward to Africa, which the Varings call Serkland, where he was strengthened with many men. In Serkland he took eighty castles, some of which surrendered, and others were stormed. He then went to Sicily. So says Thiodolf:—

"The serpent's bed of glowing gold
He hates—the generous king, the bold!
He who four score towers laid low,
Ta'en from the Saracenic foe.
Before upon Sicilian plains,
Shield joined to shield, the fight he gains,
The victory at Hild's war game;
And now the heathens dread his name."

So says also Illuge Bryndala-skald:—

"For Michael's empire Harald fought,
And southern lands to Michael brought;
So Budle's son his friendship showed
When he brought friends to his abode."

Here it is said that Michael was king of the Greeks at

that time. Harald remained many years in Africa, where he gathered great wealth in gold, jewels, and all sorts of precious things; and all the wealth he gathered there which he did not need for his expenses, he sent with trusty men of his own north to Novgorod to King Jarisleif's care and keeping. He gathered together there extraordinary treasure, as is reasonable to suppose; for he had the plundering of the part of the world richest in gold and valuable things, and he had done such great deeds as with truth are related, such as taking eighty strongholds by his valour.

6.—BATTLE IN SICILY.

Now when Harald came to Sicily he plundered there also, and sat down with his army before a strong and populous castle. He surrounded the castle; but the walls were so thick there was no possibility of breaking into it, and the people of the castle had enough of provisions, and all that was necessary for defence. Then Harald hit upon an expedient. He made his bird-catchers catch the small birds which had their nests within the castle, but flew into the woods by day to get food for their young. He had small splinters of tarred wood bound upon the backs of the birds, smeared these over with wax and sulphur, and set fire to them. As soon as the birds were let loose they all flew at once to the castle to their young, and to their nests, which they had under the house roofs that were covered with reeds or straw. The fire from the birds seized upon the house roofs; and although each bird could only carry a small burden of fire, yet all at once there was a mighty

flame, caused by so many birds carrying fire with them and spreading it widely among the house roofs. Thus one house after the other was set on fire, until the castle itself was in flames. Then the people came out of the castle and begged for mercy; the same men who for many days had set at defiance the Greek army and its leader. Harald granted life and safety to all who asked quarter, and made himself master of the place.

7.—BATTLE AT ANOTHER CASTLE.

There was another castle before which Harald had come with his army. This castle was both full of people and so strong, that there was no hope of breaking into it. The castle stood upon a flat hard plain. Then Harald undertook to dig a passage from a place where a stream ran in a bed so deep that it could not be seen from the castle. They threw out all the earth into the stream, to be carried away by the water. At this work they laboured day and night, and relieved each other in gangs; while the rest of the army went the whole day against the castle, where the castle people shot through their loop-holes. They shot at each other all day in this way, and at night they slept on both sides. Now when Harald perceived that his underground passage was so long that it must be within the castle walls, he ordered his people to arm themselves. It was towards daybreak that they went into the passage. When they got to the end of it they dug over their heads until they came upon stones laid in lime which was the floor of a stone hall. They broke open the floor and rose into the hall. There sat many of the castle-men eating

and drinking, and not in the least expecting such uninvited wolves; for the Varings instantly attacked them sword in hand, and killed some, and those who could get away fled. The Varings pursued them; and some seized the castle gate, and opened it, so that the whole body of the army got in. The people of the castle fled; but many asked quarter from the troops, which was granted to all who surrendered. In this way Harald got possession of the place, and found an immense booty in it.

8.—BATTLE AT A THIRD CASTLE.

They came to a third castle, the greatest and strongest of them all, and also the richest in property and the fullest of people. Around this castle there were great ditches, so that it evidently could not be taken by the same device as the former; and they lay a long time before it without doing anything. When the castle-men saw this they became bolder, drew up their array on the castle walls, threw open the castle gates, and shouted to the Varings, urging them, and jeering at them, and telling them to come into the castle, and that they were no more fit for battle than so many poultry. Harald told his men to make as if they did not know what to do, or did not understand what was said. "For," says he, "if we do make an assault we can effect nothing, as they can throw their weapons under their feet among us; and if we get in the castle with a party of our people, they have it in their power to shut them in, and shut out the others; for they have all the castle gates beset with men. We shall therefore show them the same scorn they show us, and let them see we

do not fear them. Our men shall go out upon the plain nearest to the castle; taking care, however, to keep out of bow-shot. All our men shall go unarmed, and be playing with each other, so that the castle-men may see we do not regard them or their array." Thus it went on for some days, without anything being done.

9.—OF ULF AND HALDOR.

Two Iceland men were then with Harald: the one was Haldor,[1] a son of the gode Snorre, who brought this account to Iceland; the other was Ulf Uspakson, a grandson of Usvifer Spake. Both were very strong men, bold under arms, and Harald's best friends; and both were in this play. Now when some days were passed the castle people showed more courage, and would go without weapons upon the castle wall, while the castle gates were standing open. The Varings observing this, went one day to their sports with the sword under their cloaks, and the helmet under their hats. After playing awhile they observed that the castle people were off their guard; and instantly seizing their weapons, they made at the castle gates. When the men of the castle saw this they went against them armed completely, and a battle began in the castle gate. The Varings had no shields, but wrapped their cloaks round their left arms. Some of them were wounded, some killed, and all stood in great danger. Now came Harald with the men who had remained in the camp, to the assistance of his people; and the castle-men had now got out upon the walls, from which they shot

[1]One of the descendants of this Haldor was Snorre Sturlason, the author of *Heimskringla*.

and threw stones down upon them: so that there was a severe battle, and those who were in the castle gates thought that help was brought them slower than they could have wished. When Harald came to the castle gate his standard-bearer fell, and Harald said to Haldor, "Do thou take up the banner now." Haldor took up the banner, and said foolishly, "Who will carry the banner before thee, if thou followest it so timidly as thou hast done for a while?" But these were words more of anger than of truth; for Harald was one of the boldest of men under arms. Then they pressed in, and had a hard battle in the castle; and the end was that Harald gained the victory and took the castle. Haldor was much wounded in the face, and it gave him great pain as long as he lived.

10.—BATTLE AT A FOURTH CASTLE.

The fourth castle which Harald came to was the greatest of all we have been speaking about. It was so strong that there was no possibility of breaking into it. They surrounded the castle, so that no supplies could get into it. When they had remained here a short time Harald fell sick, and he betook himself to his bed. He had his tent put up a little from the camp, for he found quietness and rest out of the clamour and clang of armed men. His men went usually in companies to or from him to hear his orders; and the castle people observing there was something new among the Varings, sent out spies to discover what this might mean. When the spies came back to the castle they had to tell of the illness of the commander of the Varings, and that no assault on that account had been

made on the castle. A while after Harald's strength began to fail, at which his men were very melancholy and cast down; all which was news to the castle-men. At last Harald's sickness increased so rapidly that his death was expected through all the army. Thereafter the Varings went to the castle-men; told them, in a parley, of the death of their commander; and begged of the priests to grant him burial in the castle. When the castle people heard this news, there were many among them who ruled over cloisters or other great establishments within the place, and who were very eager to get the corpse for their church, knowing that upon that there would follow very rich presents. A great many priests, therefore, clothed themselves in all their robes, and went out of the castle with cross and shrine and relics and formed a beautiful procession. The Varings also made a great burial. The coffin was borne high in the air, and over it was a tent of costly linen and before it were carried many banners. Now when the corpse was brought within the castle gate the Varings set down the coffin right across the entry, fixed a bar to keep the gates open, and sounded to battle with all their trumpets, and drew their swords. The whole army of the Varings, fully armed, rushed from the camp to the assault of the castle with shout and cry; and the monks and other priests who had gone to meet the corpse and had striven with each other who should be the first to come out and take the offering at the burial, were now striving much more who should first get away from the Varings; for they killed before their feet every one who was nearest, whether clerk or unconsecrated. The Var-

ings rummaged so well this castle that they killed all the men, pillaged everything and made an enormous booty.

11.—OF HARALD.

Harald was many years in these campaigns, both in Serkland and in Sicily. Then he came back to Constantinople with his troops and stayed there but a little time before he began his expedition to Jerusalem. There he left the pay he had received from the Greek emperor and all the Varings who accompanied him did the same. It is said that on all these expeditions Harald had fought eighteen regular battles. So says Thiodolf:—

"Harald the Stern ne'er allowed
Peace to his foemen, false and proud:
In eighteen battles, fought and won,
The valour of the Norseman shone.
The king, before his home return,
Oft dyed the bald head of the erne
With bloody specks, and o'er the waste
The sharp-claw'd wolf his footsteps traced."

12.—HARALD'S EXPEDITION TO PALESTINE.

Harald went with his men to the land of Jerusalem and then up to the city of Jerusalem, and wheresoever he came in the land all the towns and strongholds were given up to him. So says the skald Stuf, who had heard the king himself relate these tidings:—

"He went, the warrior bold and brave,
Jerusalem, the holy grave,
And the interior of the land,
To bring under the Greeks' command;
And by the terror of his name
Under his power the country came,
Nor needed wasting fire and sword
To yield obedience to his word."

Here it is told that this land came without fire and sword under Harald's command. He then went out to Jordan and bathed therein, according to the custom of

other pilgrims. Harald gave great gifts to our Lord's grave, to the Holy Cross, and other holy relics in the land of Jerusalem. He also cleared the whole road all the way out to Jordan, by killing the robbers and other disturbers of the peace. So says the skald Stuf:—

"The Agder king cleared far and wide
Jordan's fair banks on either side;
The robber-bands before him fled,
And his great name was widely spread.
The wicked people of the land
Were punished here by his dread hand,
And they hereafter will not miss
Much worse from Jesus Christ than this."

13.—HARALD PUT IN PRISON.

Thereafter he went back to Constantinople. When Harald returned to Constantinople from Jerusalem he longed to return to the North to his native land; and when he heard that Magnus Olafson, his brother's son, had become king both of Norway and Denmark, he gave up his command in the Greek service. And when the empress Zoe heard of this she became angry and raised an accusation against Harald that he had misapplied the property of the Greek emperor which he had received in the campaigns in which he was commander of the army. There was a young and beautiful girl called Maria, a brother's daughter of the empress Zoe, and Harald had paid his addresses to her; but the empress had given him a refusal. The Varings, who were then in pay in Constantinople, have told here in the North that there went a report among well-informed people that the empress Zoe herself wanted Harald for her husband, and that she chiefly blamed Harald for his determination to leave Constantinople, although another reason was given out to the public. Con-

stantinus Monomachus was at that time emperor of the Greeks and ruled along with Zoe. On this account the Greek emperor had Harald made prisoner and carried to prison.

14.—KING OLAF'S MIRACLE AND BLINDING THE GREEK EMPEROR.

When Harald drew near to the prison King Olaf the Saint stood before him and said he would assist him. On that spot of the street a chapel has since been built and consecrated to Saint Olaf and which chapel has stood there ever since. The prison was so constructed that there was a high tower open above, but a door below to go into it from the street. Through it Harald was thrust in, along with Haldor and Ulf. Next night a lady of distinction with two servants came, by the help of ladders, to the top of the tower, let down a rope into the prison and hauled them up. Saint Olaf had formerly cured this lady of a sickness and he had appeared to her in a vision and told her to deliver his brother. Harald went immediately to the Varings, who all rose from their seats when he came in and received him with joy. The men armed themselves forthwith and went to where the emperor slept. They took the emperor prisoner and put out both the eyes of him. So says Thorarin Skeggjason in his poem:—

"Of glowing gold that decks the hand
The king got plenty in this land;
But its great emperor in the strife
Was made stone-blind for all his life."

So says Thiodolf, the skald, also:—

"He who the hungry wolf's wild yell
Quiets with prey, the stern, the fell,
Midst the uproar of shriek and shout
Stung the Greek emperor's eyes both out:
The Norse king's mark will not adorn,
The Norse king's mark gives cause to mourn;
His mark the Eastern king must bear,
Groping his sightless way in fear."

In these two songs, and many others, it is told that Harald himself blinded the Greek emperor; and they would surely have named some duke, count, or other great man, if they had not known this to be the true account; and King Harald himself and other men who were with him spread the account.

15.—HARALD'S JOURNEY FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

The same night King Harald and his men went to the house where Maria slept and carried her away by force. Then they went down to where the galleys of the Varings lay, took two of them and rowed out into Sjavid sound. When they came to the place where the iron chain is drawn across the sound, Harald told his men to stretch out at their oars in both galleys; but the men who were not rowing to run all to the stern of the galley, each with his luggage in his hand. The galleys thus ran up and lay on the iron chain. As soon as they stood fast on it, and would advance no farther, Harald ordered all the men to run forward into the bow. Then the galley, in which Harald was, balanced forwards and swung down over the chain; but the other, which remained fast athwart the chain, split in two, by which many men were lost; but some were taken up out of the sound. Thus Harald escaped out of Constantinople and sailed thence into the Black Sea; but before he left the land he put the lady ashore and sent her

back with a good escort to Constantinople and bade her tell her relation, the Empress Zoe, how little power she had over Harald, and how little the empress could have hindered him from taking the lady. Harald then sailed northwards in the Ellipalta and then all round the Eastern empire. On this voyage Harald composed sixteen songs for amusement and all ending with the same words. This is one of them:—

"Past Sicily's wide plains we flew,
A dauntless, never-wearied crew;
Our viking steed rushed through the sea,
As viking-like fast, fast sailed we.
Never, I think, along this shore
Did Norseman ever sail before;
Yet to the Russian queen, I fear,
My gold-adorned, I am not dear."

With this he meant Ellisif, daughter of King Jarisleif in Novgorod.

16.—OF KING HARALD.

When Harald came to Novgorod King Jarisleif received him in the most friendly way and he remained there all winter (1045). Then he took into his own keeping all the gold and the many kinds of precious things which he had sent there from Constantinople and which together made up so vast a treasure that no man in the Northern lands ever saw the like of it in one man's possession. Harald had been three times in the poluta-svarf while he was in Constantinople. It is the custom, namely, there, that every time one of the Greek emperors dies, the Varings are allowed poluta-svarf; that is, they may go through all the emperor's palaces where his treasures are and each may take and keep what he can lay hold of while he is going through them.

17.—KING HARALD'S MARRIAGE.

This winter King Jarisleif gave Harald his daughter Elisabeth in marriage. She is called by the Northmen Ellisif. This is related by Stuf the Blind, thus:—

"Agder's chief now got the queen
Who long his secret love had been.
Of gold, no doubt, a mighty store
The princess to her husband bore."

In spring he began his journey from Novgorod and came to Aldeigjuborg, where he took shipping and sailed from the East in summer. He turned first to Svithjod and came to Sigtuna. So says Valgard o' Val:—

"The fairest cargo ship e'er bore,
From Russia's distant eastern shore
The gallant Harald homeward brings—
Gold, and a fame that skald still sings.
The ship through dashing foam he steers,
Through the sea-rain to Svithjod veers,
And at Sigtuna's grassy shores
His gallant vessel safely moors."

18.—THE LEAGUE BETWEEN KING HARALD AND SVEIN ULFSON.

Harald found there before him Svein Ulfson, who the autumn before (1045) had fled from King Magnus at Helganes; and when they met they were very friendly on both sides. The Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, was brother of the mother of Ellisif, Harald's wife; and Astrid, the mother of Svein, was King Olaf's sister. Harald and Svein entered into friendship with each other and confirmed it by oath. All the Swedes were friendly to Svein, because he belonged to the greatest family in the country; and thus all the Swedes were Harald's friends and helpers also, for many great men were connected with him by relationship. So says Thiodolf:—

"Cross the East sea the vessel flew,—
Her oak-keel a white furrow drew
From Russia's coast to Swedish land,
Where Harald can great help command.
The heavy vessel's leeward side
Was hid beneath the rushing tide;
While the broad sail and gold-tipped mast
Swung to and fro in the hard blast."

19.—KING HARALD'S FORAY.

Then Harald and Svein fitted out ships and gathered together a great force; and when the troops were ready they sailed from the East towards Denmark. So says Valgard:—

"Brave Yngve! to the land decreed
To thee by fate, with tempest speed
The winds fly with thee o'er the sea—
To thy own udal land with thee.

As past the Scanian plains they fly,
The gay ships glance 'twixt sea and sky,
And Scanian brides look out, and fear
Some ill to those they hold most dear."

They landed first in Seeland with their men and herried and burned in the land far and wide. Then they went to Fyen, where they also landed and wasted. So says Valgard:—

"Harald! thou hast the isle laid waste,
The Seeland men away hast chased,
And the wild wolf by daylight roams
Through their deserted silent homes.
Fiona too could not withstand
The fury of thy wasting hand.
Helms burst, shields broke,—Fiona's bounds,
Were filled with death's terrific sounds.

"Red flashing in the southern sky,
The clear flame sweeping broad and high,
From fair Roeskilde's lofty towers,
On lowly huts its fire-rain pours;
And shows the housemates' silent train
In terror scouring o'er the plain,
Seeking the forest's deepest glen,
To house with wolves, and 'scape from men.

"Few were they of escape to tell,
For, sorrow-worn, the people fell:
The only captives from the fray
Were lovely maidens led away.
And in wild terror to the strand,
Down to the ships, the linked band
Of fair-haired girls is roughly driven,
Their soft skins by the irons riven."

20.—KING MAGNUS'S LEVY.

King Magnus Olafson sailed north to Norway in the autumn after the battle at Helganes (1045). There he hears the news that Harald Sigurdson, his relation, was come to Svithjod; and moreover that Svein Ulfson and Harald had entered into a friendly bond with each other

and gathered together a great force, intending first to subdue Denmark and then Norway. King Magnus then ordered a general levy over all Norway and he soon collected a great army. He hears then that Harald and Svein were come to Denmark and were burning and laying waste the land and that the country people were everywhere submitting to them. It was also told that King Harald was stronger and stouter than other men, and so wise withal that nothing was impossible to him, and he had always the victory when he fought a battle; and he was also so rich in gold that no man could compare with him in wealth. Thiodolf speaks thus of it:—

"Norsemen, who stand the sword of foe
Like forest-stems unmoved by blow!
My hopes are fled, no peace is near,—
People fly here and there in fear.
On either side of Seeland's coast
A fleet appears—a white winged host:
Magnus from Norway takes his course,
Harald from Sweden leads his force."

21.—TREATY BETWEEN HARALD AND MAGNUS.

Those of Harald's men who were in his counsel said that it would be a great misfortune if relations like Harald and Magnus should fight and throw a death-spear against each other; and therefore many offered to attempt bringing about some agreement between them, and the kings, by their persuasion, agreed to it. Thereupon some men were sent off in a light boat, in which they sailed south in all haste to Denmark, and got some Danish men, who were proven friends of King Magnus, to propose this matter to Harald. This affair was conducted very secretly. Now when Harald heard that his relation, King Magnus, would offer him a league and partition, so that

Harald should have half of Norway with King Magnus, and that they should divide all their movable property into two equal parts, he accepted the proposal, and the people went back to King Magnus with this answer.

22.—TREATY BETWEEN HARALD AND SVEIN BROKEN.

A little after this it happened that Harald and Svein one evening were sitting at table drinking and talking together, and Svein asked Harald what valuable piece of all his property he esteemed the most.

He answered, it was his banner Land-waster.

Svein asked what was there remarkable about it, that he valued it so highly.

Harald replied, it was a common saying that he must gain the victory before whom that banner is borne, and it had turned out so ever since he had owned it.

Svein replies, "I will begin to believe there is such virtue in the banner when thou hast held three battles with thy relation Magnus, and hast gained them all."

Then answered Harald with an angry voice, "I know my relationship to King Magnus, without thy reminding me of it; and although we are now going in arms against him, our meeting may be of a better sort."

Svein changed colour, and said, "There are people, Harald, who say that thou hast done as much before as only to hold that part of an agreement which appears to suit thy own interest best."

Harald answers, "It becomes thee ill to say that I have not stood by an agreement, when I know what King Magnus could tell of thy proceedings with him."

Thereupon each went his own way. At night, when Harald went to sleep within the bulwarks of his vessel, he said to his footboy, "I will not sleep in my bed to-night, for I suspect there may be treachery abroad. I observed this evening that my friend Svein was very angry at my free discourse. Thou shalt keep watch, therefore, in case anything happen in the night." Harald then went away to sleep somewhere else, and laid a billet of wood in his place. At midnight a boat rowed alongside to the ship's bulwark; a man went on board, lifted up the cloth of the tent of the bulwarks, went up, and struck in Harald's bed with a great ax, so that it stood fast in the lump of wood. The man instantly ran back to his boat again, and rowed away in the dark night, for the moon was set; but the axe remained sticking in the piece of wood as an evidence. Thereupon Harald waked his men and let them know the treachery intended. "We can now see sufficiently," said he, "that we could never match Svein if he practises such deliberate treachery against us; so it will be best for us to get away from this place while we can. Let us cast loose our vessel and row away as quietly as possible." They did so, and rowed during the night northwards along the land; and then proceeded night and day until they came to King Magnus, where he lay with his army. Harald went to his relation Magnus, and there was a joyful meeting betwixt them. So says Thiodolf:—

"The far-known king the order gave,
In silence o'er the swelling wave,
With noiseless oars, his vessels gay
From Denmark west to row away;
And Olaf's son, with justice rare,
Offers with him the realm to share.
People, no doubt, rejoiced to find
The kings had met in peaceful mind."

Afterwards the two relatives conversed with each other and all was settled by peaceful agreement.

23.—KING MAGNUS GIVES HARALD HALF OF NORWAY.

King Magnus lay at the shore and had set up tents upon the land. There he invited his relation, King Harald, to be his guest at table; and Harald went to the entertainment with sixty of his men and was feasted excellently. Towards the end of the day King Magnus went into the tent where Harald sat and with him went men carrying parcels consisting of clothes and arms. Then the king went to the man who sat lowest and gave him a good sword, to the next a shield, to the next a kirtle, and so on, —clothes, or weapons, or gold; to all he gave one or the other valuable gift, and the more costly to the more distinguished men among them. Then he placed himself before his relation Harald, holding two sticks in his haind, and said, "Which of these two sticks wilt thou have, my friend?"

Harald replies, "The one nearest me."

"Then," said King Magnus, "with this stick I give thee half of the Norwegian power, with all the scat and duties, and all the domains thereunto belonging, with the condition that everywhere thou shalt be as lawful king in Norway as I am myself; but when we are both together in one place, I shall be the first man in seat, service and salutation; and if there be three of us together of equal dignity, that I shall sit in the middle, and shall have the royal tent-ground and the royal landing-place. Thou shalt strengthen and advance our kingdom, in return for mak-

ing thee that man in Norway whom we never expected any man should be so long as our head was above ground."

Then Harald stood up, and thanked him for the high title and dignity. Thereupon they both sat down, and were very merry together. The same evening Harald and his men returned to their ships.

24.—HARALD GIVES MAGNUS THE HALF OF HIS TREASURES.

The following morning King Magnus ordered the trumpets to sound to a General Thing of the people; and when it was seated, he made known to the whole army the gift he had given to his relation Harald. Thorer of Steig gave Harald the title of King there at the Thing; and the same day King Harald invited King Magnus to table with him, and he went with sixty men to King Harald's land-tent, where he had prepared a feast. The two kings sat together on a high-seat, and the feast was splendid; everything went on with magnificence, and the kings were merry and glad. Towards the close of the day King Harald ordered many caskets to be brought into the tent, and in like manner people bore in weapons, clothes and other sorts of valuables; and all these King Harald divided among King Magnus's men who were at the feast. Then he had the caskets opened and said to King Magnus, "Yesterday you gave us a large kingdom, which your hand won from your and our enemies, and took us in partnership with you, which was well done; and this has cost you much. Now we on our side have been in foreign parts, and oft in peril of life, to gather together the gold

which you here see. Now, King Magnus, I will divide this with you. We shall both own this movable property, and each have his equal share of it, as each has his equal half share of Norway. I know that our dispositions are different, as thou art more liberal than I am; therefore let us divide this property equally between us, so that each may have his share free to do with as he will." Then Harald had a large ox-hide spread out, and turned the gold out of the caskets upon it. Then scales and weights were taken and the gold separated and divided by weight into equal parts; and all people wondered exceedingly that so much gold should have come together in one place in the northern countries. But it was understood that it was the Greek emperor's property and wealth; for, as all people say, there are whole houses there full of red gold. The kings were now very merry. Then there appeared an ingot among the rest as big as a man's hand. Harald took it in his hands and said, "Where is the gold, friend Magnus, that thou canst show against this piece?"

King Magnus replied, "So many disturbances and levies have been in the country that almost all the gold and silver I could lay up is gone. I have no more gold in my possession than this ring." And he took the ring off his hand and gave it to Harald.

Harald looked at it, and said, "That is but little gold, friend, for the king who owns two kingdoms; and yet some may doubt whether thou art rightful owner of even this ring."

Then King Magnus replied, after a little reflection,

"If I be not rightful owner of this ring, then I know not what I have got right to; for my father, King Olaf the Saint, gave me this ring at our last parting."

Then said King Harald, laughing, "It is true, King Magnus, what thou sayest. Thy father gave thee this ring, but he took the ring from my father for some trifling cause; and in truth it was not a good time for small kings in Norway when thy father was in full power."

King Harald gave Thorer of Steig at that feast a bowl of mountain birch, that was encircled with a silver ring and had a silver handle, both which parts were gilt; and the bowl was filled with money of pure silver. With that came also two gold rings, which together stood for a mark. He gave him also his cloak of dark purple lined with white skins within, and promised him besides his friendship and great dignity. Thorgils Snorrason, an intelligent man, says he has seen an altar-cloth that was made of this cloak; and Gudrid, a daughter of Guthorm, the son of Thorer of Steig, said, according to Thorgil's account, that she had seen this bowl in her father Guthorm's possession. Bolverk also tells of these matters:—

"Thou, generous king, I have been told,
For the green land hast given gold;
And Magnus got a mighty treasure,
That thou one half might'st rule at pleasure.
The people gained a blessed peace,
Which 'twixt the kings did never cease;
While Svein, disturbed with war's alarms,
Had his folk always under arms."

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